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FRONTISPIECE.

Diana preparing for the Chase; attended by Health and Contentment.

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THOUGHTS

ON

HUNTING.

IN A

SERIES OF FAMILIAR LETTERS

TO A FRIEND.

BY WILLIAM BECKFORD, ESQ.

ILLUSTRATED BY PLATES, FROM ORIGINAL PAINTINGS,

ENGRAVED BY

MR. JOHN SCOTT.

——SI QUID NOVISTI RECTIUS ISTIS,
CANDIDUS IMPERTI: SI NON, HIS UTERE MECUM.—

HOR.

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THOUGHTS

ON

HUNTING.

LETTER I.

Bristol Hot-Wells, March 20, 1779.

You could not have chosen, my Friend, a better time than the present, to remind me of my promise to send you my Thoughts on Hunting; for the accident that brought me hither is likely to detain me some time, nor have I any longer an excuse for not obeying your commands. Indeed I have hitherto excused myself, in hopes some publication or other on that subject might have rendered these Letters unnecessary; but as nothing of the kind has appeared, notwithstanding it is so much wanted, I am myself at this time sufficiently idle to undertake the task, nor shall I think it a trifling subject to write on, if you think it a necessary one: I wish the experience I have had of that diversion, may enable me to answer the many questions you are pleased to make concerning it.

 Knowing

The author's partiality for prose writing.

Knowing your partiality to rhyme, I could wish to send you my thoughts in verse; but as this would take me longer time, without answering your purpose better, I must beg you to accept them in humble prose—in my opinion, better suited to the subject. Didactic essays should be as little clogged as possible; they should proceed regularly, and clearly; should be easily written, and as easily understood, having less to do with words than things. The game of *crambo* is out of fashion, to the no small prejudice of the rhyming tribe; and before I could find a rhyme to *porringer,* I should hope to finish a great part of these letters. I shall therefore, without further delay, proceed upon them: This however I must desire to be first understood between us, that when, to save trouble to us both, I say a thing *is,* without tacking a salvo to the tail of it, such as, *in my opinion—to the best of my judgment*, &c. &c. —you shall not call my humility in question, as the assertion is not meant to be mathematically certain. When I have any better authority than my own, such as Somervile for instance, (who by the bye, is the only one I believe, who has written on this subject to be understood), I shall take the liberty of giving it you in his own words, to save you the trouble of turning to him.

The English deficient in the theory of hunting.

You may remember perhaps, when we were hunting together at Turin, and the hounds had ost the stag, and the piqueurs, (still more in fault than they) knew not which way to try, the King bid them ask *Milord Anglois*;—nor is it to be wondered at if an Englishman should be thought to understand the art of hunting, when the hounds this country produces are universally allowed to be the best in the whole world—from which I think this inference may be drawn, that although every man who follows this diversion may not understand it, yet that it is extraordinary of the many that do, that one only of any note should have written on the subject.—It is rather unfortunate for me that the ingenious sportsman should have preferred writing an elegant poem, to an useful lesson; since if he had pleased, he might easily have saved me the trouble of writing these Letters. Is it not strange that in a country where the press is in one continued labour with opinions of almost every kind, from the most serious and instructive, to the most ridiculous and trifling; a country besides, so famous for the best hounds, and the best horses to follow them, whose authors sometimes hunt, and whose sportsmen sometimes write, that only the practical part of hunting should be understood?—There is however no doubt but

that the practical part of it would be improved, were theory to accompany it.

France, Germany, and Italy are also silent, I believe, on this subject, though each of these countries has had its sportsmen. Foxes it is true they never hunt, and hares but seldom; yet the stag and wild boar in France and in Germany are still pursued with the utmost splendour and magnificence. In Italy, I believe there has been no hunting since the death of the Duke of Parma; he was very fond of it, and I apprehend all hunting in that country ceased with him. The only sportsmen now remaining are gentlemen in green coats, who taking their *couteaux dc chasse* along with them, walk into the fields to catch small birds, which they call *ander a la caccia,* or in plain English *going a hunting;* yet it has not been so with horsemanship; *that* has been treated scientifically by all—in Italy by Pignatelli,—in Germany by Isenbourg,—and in France by La Gueriniere: Nor are the useful lessons of the Duke of Newcastle confined to this country only; they are both read and practised every where; nor is *he* the only noble lord who has written on the subject.—While on hunting, all are silent; and were it not for the muse of Somervile, which has so judiciously and so sweetly sung, the dog, that useful,

useful, that honest, that faithful, that disinterested, that entertaining animal, would be suffered to pass unnoticed and undistinguished.

A Northern court once indeed did honor this animal with a particular mark of approbation and respect, but the fidelity of the dog has since given place to the sagacity of the elephant. Naturalists, it is true, have included dogs in the specific descriptions they have given us of animals.—Authors may have written on hunting, and booksellers may know many, that to sportsmen are unknown—but I again repeat that I know not any writer, antient or modern, from the time of Nimrod to the present day (one only excepted) who has given any useful information to a sportsman.

It may be objected, that the hunting of a pack of hounds depends on the huntsman; and that the huntsman, generally speaking, is an illiterate fellow, who seldom can either read or write;—This cannot well be denied.—I must therefore observe, that it is impossible the business of a kennel should go on as it ought, unless the master himself knows something of it; for there must be an understanding somewhere; nor can any gentleman enjoy this noble diversion in perfection without it.

It

Qualities necessary for a huntsman.

It is the opinion of a great sportsman, that it is as difficult to find a perfect huntsman, as a good prime minister. Without taking upon me to determine what requisites may be necessary to form a good prime minister, I will describe some of those which are essentially necessary towards making a perfect huntsman; qualities which, I will venture to say, would not disgrace more brilliant situations:—such as a clear head, nice observation, quick apprehension, undaunted courage, strength of constitution, activity of body; a good ear, and a good voice.

There is not any one of those branches of knowledge, commonly dignified with the title of arts, which has not its rudiments or principles, through which a competent knowledge, if not perfection, may be obtained: whereas hunting, the sole business of some, and the amusement of the greatest part of the youth of this kingdom, seems left alone to chance. Its pursuit puts us both to greater expence, and greater inconvenience than any thing besides, and yet we trust our diversion in it to the sole guidance of a huntsman: We follow just as he chooses to lead us; and we suffer the success, or disappointment of the chase to depend solely on the judgment of a fellow, who is frequently a greater brute than the creature on which

which he rides. I would not be understood to mean by this, that an huntsman should be a scholar, or that every gentleman should hunt his own hounds. A huntsman need not be a man of letters; but give me leave to say, that had he the best understanding, he would frequently find opportunities of exercising it, and intricacies which might put it to the test. You will say, perhaps, there is something too laborious in the occupation of a huntsman for a gentleman to take it upon himself; you may also think that it is beneath him; I agree with you in both,—yet I hope, he may have leave to understand it.—If he follows the diversion it is a sign of his liking it; and if he likes it, surely it is some disgrace to him to be ignorant of it.

I find it will not be necessary to say much to recommend a diversion to you, which you so professedly admire; it would be needless therefore to enumerate the heroes of antiquity who were taught the art of hunting, or the many great men among whom was the famous Galen, who join in recommending it. I shall, however, remind you that your beloved hero, Henry the Fourth of France made it his chief amusement, and his very love letters, strange as it may appear, are full of little else: and that one of the greatest ministers

this country ever produced, was so fond of this diversion, that the first letter he opened, as I have been told, was generally that of his huntsman.—In most countries, from the earliest times, hunting has been a principal occupation of the people, either for use or amusement, and many princes have made it their chief delight;—a circumstance which occasioned the following *bon mot*.—Louis the Fifteenth was so passionately fond of this diversion, that it occupied him intirely; the King of Prussia, who never hunts, gives up a great deal of his time to music, and plays himself on the flute: a German, last war, meeting a Frenchman, asked him very impertinently, "*si son maitre* "*chassoit toujours?*" — "*oui, oui,*" repliqua l'autre—"*il ne joue jamais de la flute.*"—The reply was excellent, but it would have been as well, perhaps, for mankind, if that great man had never been otherwise employed.—Hunting is the soul of a country life; it gives health to the body, and content to the mind, and is one of the few pleasures we can enjoy in society, without prejudice either to ourselves, or our friends.

The Spectator has drawn with infinite humour the character of a man who passes his whole life in pursuit of trifles; and I have no doubt, other Will Wimbles might still be found. I hope how-

ever

ever he did not think they were confined to the country only. Triflers there are of every denomination.—Are we not all triflers ? and are we not told that all is vanity?—The Spectator without doubt felt great compassion for Mr. Wimble; yet Mr. Wimble, might not have been a proper object of it; since it is more than probable he was a happy man, if the employing of his time in obliging others, and pleasing himself can be thought to have made him so :—Whether vanity misleads us or not in the choice of our pursuits, the pleasures or advantages which result from them, will best determine.—I fear the occupation of few gentlemen will allow of nice scrutiny; occupations therefore that amuse, and are at the same time innocent, that promote exercise and conduce to health, though they may appear trifles in the eyes of others, certainly are not so to those who enjoy them: of this number I think I may reckon hunting; and I am particularly glad the same author furnishes a quotation in support of it; "for my own part," says this elegant writer, "I intend to "hunt twice a week during my stay with Sir Roger; "and shall prescribe the moderate use of this ex-"ercise to all my country friends, as the best phy-"sic for mending a bad constitution, and preserv-"ing a good one."—The inimitable Cervantes, also makes honourable mention of this diversion,

he makes Sancho say—"mercy on me what plea-
"sure can you find, any of ye all, in killing a poor "beast that never meant any harm?" that the Duke may reply,—"you are mistaken, Sancho; "hunting wild beasts is the most proper exercise "for knights and princes; for in the chace of a "stout noble beast, may be represented the whole "art of war, stratagems, policy, and ambuscades, "with all other devices usually practised to over-"come an enemy with safety. Here we are ex-"posed to the extremities of heat and cold; ease "and laziness can have no room in this diversion; "by this we are inured to toil and hardship, our "limbs are strengthened, our joints made supple, "and our whole body hale and active: In short "it is an exercise that may be beneficial to many, "and can be prejudicial to none."—Small indeed is the number of those who in the course of five thousand years have employed themselves in the advancement of useful knowledge. Mankind have been blest with but one Titus, that we know of, and it is to be feared he has had but few imitators. Days and years fly away without any account taken of them, and how many may reasonably be supposed to pass without affording even amusement to others, or satisfaction to ourselves. Much more, I think, may be said in favour of the Wimbles; but it must be confest, that the man

who spends his whole time in trifles, passes it contemptibly, compared with those who are employed in researches after knowledge useful to mankind, or in professions useful to the state.

I am glad to find you approve of the plan I propose to observe in the course of these Letters, in which it shall be my endeavour to omit nothing, that may be necessary for you to know; at least, as far as my own observation and experience will give me leave. The experience I have had may be of use to you at present; others perhaps hereafter may write more judiciously and more fully on the subject: You know it is my interest to wish they would. The few who have written on hunting, refer you to their predecessors for great part of the information you might expect from them: and who their predecessors were, I have yet to learn. Even Somervile is less copious than I could wish, and has purposely omitted what is not to be found elsewhere;—I mean receipts for the cure of such diseases as hounds are subject to. He holds such information cheap, and beneath his lofty muse. Prose has no excuse, and you may depend on every information I can give.—The familiar manner in which my Thoughts will be conveyed to you in these Letters, will sufficiently evince the intention of the author.—They are written with

with no other design than to be of use to sportsmen.—Were my aim to amuse, I would not endeavour to instruct. A song might suit the purpose better than an essay. To improve health by promoting exercise;—to excite gentlemen who are fond of hunting to obtain the knowledge necessary to enjoy it in perfection;—and to lessen the punishments which are too often inflicted on an animal so friendly to man, are the chief ends intended by the following Letters.

I shall not pretend to lay down rules which are to be equally good in every country; I shall think myself sufficiently justified in recommending such as have been tried with success in the countries where I have generally hunted. As almost every country has a different dialect, you will also excuse, I hope, any terms that may not be current with *you*: I will take the best care I can that their number shall be few. I need not, I think, advise you not to adopt too easily the opinions of other men. You will hear a tall man say it is nonsense to ride any but large horses; and every little man in company, will immediately sell his little horses, buy such as he can hardly mount, and ride them in hilly countries for which they are totally unfit. Pride induces some men to dictate; indolence makes others like to be dictated

tated to; so both find their account in it. You will not let this mislead you.—You will dare to think for yourself.—Nor will you believe every man who pretends to know what you like, better than you do yourself.—There is a degree of coxcombry, I believe, in every thing. You have heard, I make no doubt, that greyhounds are either black, or white, or black and white; and if you have any faith in those who say they know best, they will tell you there are no others.—Prejudice however is by far too blind a guide to be depended on.

I have read somewhere that there is no book so bad, but a judicious reader may derive some advantage from the reading of it; I hope these letters will not prove the only exception. Should they fall into the hands of such as are not sportsmen, I need not, I think, make any excuses to them for the contents, since the title sufficiently shews for whom they were designed. Nor are they meant for such sportsmen as need not instruction, but for those that do; to whom, I presume, in some parts at least, they may be found of use. As a great book has been long looked upon as a great evil, I shall take care not to sin that way at least, and shall endeavour to make these Letters as short as the extent of my subject will admit.

You

You will rally me, perhaps, on the choice of my frontispiece; but why should not hunting admit the patronage of a lady? The antients, you know, invoked Diana at setting out on the chace, and sacrificed to her at their return. Is not this enough to shew the propriety of my choice? At all events, I assure myself, you will approve her attendants—*Health* and *Contentment.*

I shall now take my leave of you for the present. In my next letter I shall proceed according to your desire, 'till I have answered all your questions. Remember you are not to expect entertainment; I wish you may find some instruction; the dryness of the subject may excuse *your* want of the one, and I cannot doubt of your indulgence should *I* fail in the other, whilst I am obeying your commands.

LET-

LETTER II.

SINCE you intend to make hunting your chief amusement in the country, you are certainly in the right to give it some consideration before you begin, and not like Master Stephen in the play, buy first a hawk, and then hunt after a book to keep it by.— I am glad to find that you intend to build a new kennel, as I flatter myself the experience I have had may be of some use to you in the building of it. It is not only the first thing you should do, but it is also the most important. As often as your mind may alter, so often may you easily change from one kind of hound to another; but your kennel will still remain the same; will always keep its original imperfections, unless altered at a great expence, to be less perfect at last, than it might have been made at first, had you pursued a proper plan. It is true, hounds may be kept in barns and stables; but those who keep them in such places can best inform you whether their hounds are capable of answering the purposes for which they are kept. The sense of smelling, the *odora canum vis*, as Virgil calls it, is so exquisite in a hound, that I cannot but suppose

pose every stench is hurtful to it. It is that faculty on which all our hopes depend; it is *that* which must lead us over greasy fallows, where the feet of the game we pursue being clogged, leave little scent behind, as well as o'er stony roads, through watery meads, and where sheep have stained the ground.

Cleanliness is not only absolutely necessary to the nose of the hound, but also to the preservation of his health. Dogs are naturally cleanly animals: They seldom, when they can help it, dung where they lie: air and fresh straw are necessary to keep them healthy. They are subject to the mange; a disorder, to which poverty and nastiness do very much contribute. *This,* though easily stopped at its first appearance, if suffered to continue long, greatly lessens the powers of the animal; and the remedies which must then be used, being in themselves violent, often injure his constitution: It had better be prevented: Let the kennel therefore be your particular care.

> " Upon some little eminence erect,
> And fronting to the ruddy dawn; its courts
> On either hand wide op'ning to receive
> The sun's all-cheering beams, when mild he shines,
> And gilds the mountain tops."

Such

Plan of a kennel.

Such as Somervile directs may be the situation; its size must be suited to the number of its inhabitants; the architecture of it may be conformable to your own taste. Useless expence I should not recommend, yet as I suppose you will often make it a visit, at least in the hunting season, I could wish it might have a neatness without, as well as cleanliness within, the more to tempt you to it. I should for the same reason wish it to be as near your house, as you will give it leave. I know there are many objections to its being near: I foresee still more to its being at a distance: there is a vulgar saying, that it is the master's eye that makes the horse fat; I can assure you it is even more necessary in the kennel, where cleanliness is not less essential than food.

There are, I make no doubt, many better kennels than mine; some of which I think, you should see before you begin to build: you can but make use of my plan in case you should like no other better. If, in the mean time, I am to give you my opinion what a kennel ought to be, I must send you a description of my own, for I have not seen many others.

I would advise you to make it large enough at first, as any addition to it afterwards must spoil

 the

the appearance of it. I have been obliged to add to mine, which was built from a plan of my own, and intended, at first, for a pack of beagles. As my feeding-yard is too small, I will endeavour to remedy that defect in the plan I send you, which plan may be still enlarged or lessened, as you think fit; or as your occasions may require.

I think two kennels absolutely necessary to the well-being of the hounds: when there is but one, it is seldom sweet; and when cleaned out, the hounds, particularly in winter, suffer both whilst it is cleaning, and as long as it remains wet afterwards. To be more clearly understood by you, I shall call one of these the *hunting-kennel*, by which I mean that kennel into which the hounds are drafted which are to hunt the next day. Used always to the same kennel, they will be drafted with little trouble; they will answer to their names more readily, and you may count your hounds into the kennel with as much ease as a shepherd counts his sheep out of the fold.

When the feeder first comes to the kennel in a morning, he should let out the hounds into the outer court; at the same time opening the door of the hunting-kennel, lest want of rest, or bad weather should incline them to go into it. The

lodging-

lodging-room should then be cleaned out, the doors and windows of it opened, the litter shaken up, and that whole kennel made sweet and clean before the hounds return to it again. The great court and the other kennels are not less to be attended to, nor should you pass over in silence any omission that is hurtful to your hounds.

The floor of each lodging-room should be brick'd, and slop'd on both sides to run to the center, with a gutter left to carry off the water, that when they are washed, they may be soon dry. If water should stand through any fault in the floor, it should be carefully mopped up; for as warmth is in the greatest degree necessary to hounds after work, so damps are equally prejudicial. You will think me, perhaps, too particular in these directions; yet there can be no harm in your knowing what your servants ought to do; as it is not impossible but it may be sometimes necessary for you to see that it is done. In your military profession you are perfectly acquainted with the duty of a common soldier, and though you have no further business with the minutiæ of it, there is no doubt but you still find the knowledge of them useful to you: Believe me, they may be useful *here;* and you will pardon me, I hope, if I wish to see you a Martinet in the kennel, as well as in the field.—

Orders given without skill are seldom well obeyed, and where the master is either ignorant, or inattentive, the servant will be idle.

I also wish that, contrary to the usual practice in building kennels, you would have three doors; two in the front, and one in the back; the last to have a lattice window in it, with a wooden shutter, which is constantly to be kept closed when the hounds are in, except in summer, when it should be left open all the day. This door answers two very necessary purposes: It gives an opportunity of carrying out the straw when the lodging-room is cleaned, and as it is opposite to the window, will be a means to let in a thorough air, which will greatly contribute to the keeping of it sweet and wholesome. The other doors will be of use in drying the room, when the hounds are out, and as one is to be kept shut, and the other hooked back, (allowing just room for a dog to pass) they are not liable to any objection. The great window in the centre should have a folding shutter; half, or the whole of which, may be shut at nights, according to the weather; and your kennels by that means, may be kept warm, or cool, just as you please to have them. The two great lodging-rooms are exactly alike, and as each has a court belonging to it, are distinct kennels, and are at the

opposite ends of the building; in the centre of which, is the boiling-house, and feeding-yard; and on each side a lesser kennel, either for hounds that are drafted off; hounds that are sick or lame; or for any other purposes, as occasion may require. At the back of which, as they are but half the depth of the two great kennels, are places for coals, &c. for the use of the kennel. There is also a small building in the rear for hot bitches. The plan will shew you the size of the whole. The floors of the inner courts, like to those of the lodging-rooms, are bricked and sloped to run to the centre, and a channel of water, brought in by a leaden pipe, runs through the middle of them. In the centre of each court is a well, large enough to dip a bucket to clean the kennels; this must be faced with stone, or it will be often out of repair. In the feeding-yard, you must have a wooden cover.

The benches, which must be open to let the urine through, should have hinges and hooks in the wall, that they may fold up, for the greater convenience of washing out the kennel; and they should be made as low as possible, that a tired hound may have no difficulty in jumping up; let me add, that the boiler should be of cast-iron.

The rest of the kennel consists of a large court

in front, which is also bricked, having a grass-court adjoining, and a little brook running through the middle of it. The earth was taken out of it, is thrown up into a mount, where the hounds in summer delight to sit. This court is planted round with trees, and has besides a lime tree, and some horse chesnut trees near the middle of it, for the sake of shade. A high pale incloses the whole; part of which, to the height of about four feet, is close; the other open: the interstices are about two inches wide. The grass-court is pitched near the pale, to prevent the hounds from scratching out.—If you cannot guess the intention of the posts you see in the courts, there is scarcely an inn-window on any road, where the following lines will not let you into the secret:—

"So dogs will p--- where dogs have p---'d before."

This is done to save the trees, to which the urinary salts are prejudicial. If they are at first backward in coming to them, bind some straw round the bottom, and rub it with galbanum.—The brook in the grass-court may serve as a stew: your fish will be very safe.

At the back of the kennel is a house, thatched and

and furzed up on the sides, big enough to contain at least a load of straw. Here should be a pit ready to receive the dung, and a gallows for the flesh. The gallows should have a thatched roof, and a circular board at the posts of it, to prevent vermin from climbing up.

A stove, I believe, is made use of in some kennels; but where the feeder is a good one, a mop, properly used, will render it unnecessary. I have a little hay-rick in the grass-yard, which I think is of use to keep the hounds clean and fine in their coats; you will find them frequently rubbing themselves against it: The shade of it also is useful to them in summer. If ticks at any time should be troublesome in your kennel, let the walls of it be well washed; if that does not destroy them, the walls should then be white-washed.

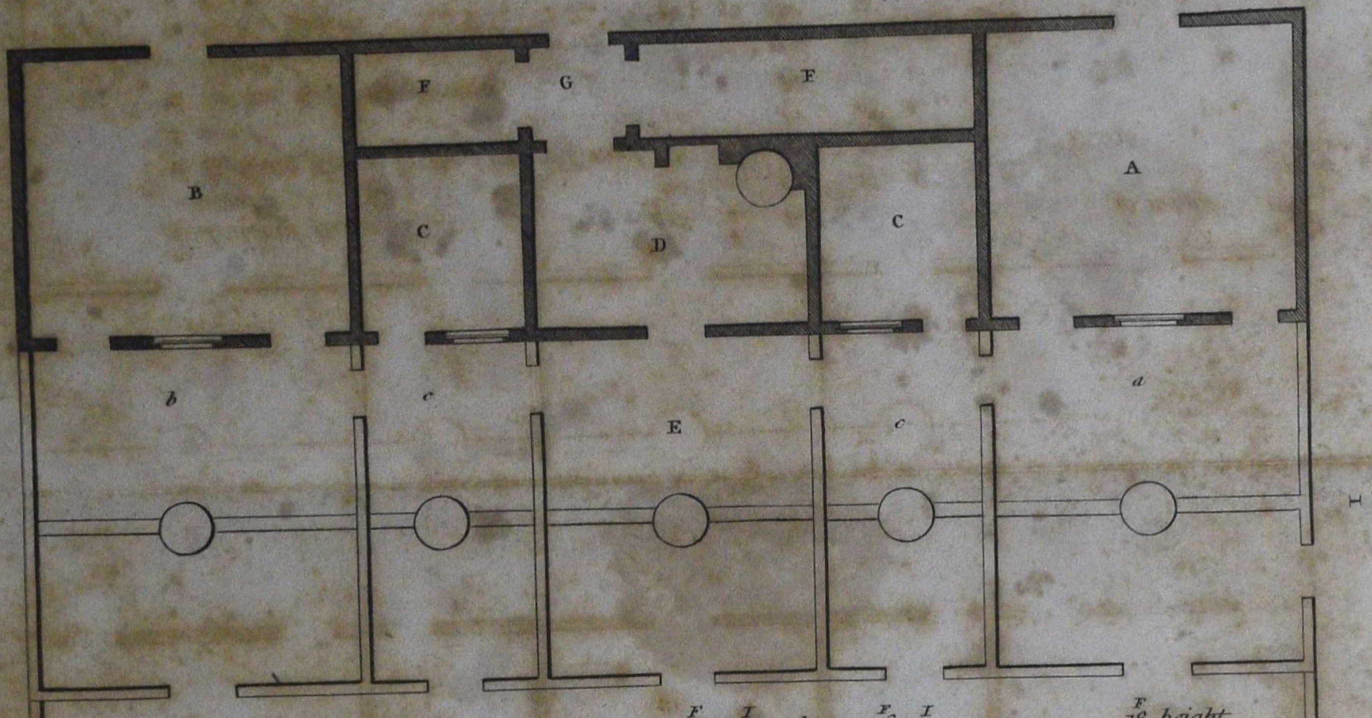
In the summer when you do not hunt, one kennel will be sufficient; the other then may be for the young hounds, who should also have the grass-court adjoining to it. It is best at that time of the year to keep them separate, and it prevents many accidents which otherwise might happen; nor should they be put together till the hunting season begins. If your hounds are very quarrel-

some, the feeder may sleep in a cot, in the kennel adjoining; and if they are well chastised at the first quarrel, his voice will be sufficient to settle all their differences afterwards. Close to the door of the kennel, let there be always a quantity of little switches; which three narrow boards, nailed to one of the posts, will easily contain.

My kennel is close to the road-side, but it was unavoidable. This is the reason why my front pale is close, and only the side ones open; it is a great fault: avoid it if you can, and your hounds will be the quieter.

Upon looking over my letter, I find, I begin recommending with Mr. Somervile, a high situation for the kennel, and afterwards talk of a brook running through the middle of it; I am afraid you will not be able to unite these two advantages; in which case, there is no doubt, but water should be preferred: The mount I have mentioned will answer all the purposes of an eminence: Besides, there should be moveable stages on wheels, for the hounds to lie upon; at any rate, however, let your soil be a dry one.

You will think, perhaps, my lodging-rooms higher than is necessary. I know they are considerably



	F	I	by	F	I	F height
A. Lodging Room	18	4	by	16		18
a. Court	20		by	18	4	
B. Lodging Room to the Hunting Kennel	18	4	by	16		18
b. Court	20		by	18	4	
C. Smaller Lodging Rooms	10	1	by	9	4½	18
c. Courts	20		by	9	4½	
D. Boiling House	15	4½	by	10		18
E. Feeding Court	20		by	15	4½	
F. Places for Coals &c.	10		by	5	1	
F.	9	4	by	5	1	
G. Passage	5	6	by	5	1	
H. Great Court						
I. Grass Court						

siderably higher than is usual; the intention of which, is, to give more air to the hounds; and I have not the least doubt but they are better for it. —I will no longer persecute you with this unentertaining subject, but send you the plan of my own kennel, and take my leave of you.

P. S. I send only the ground-plan and elevation, as the size of the outer-court, and grass-court, are perfectly immaterial; the one should not be small, and the other should be as large as you can conveniently make it.

LETTER

LETTER III.

I BEGIN this letter with assuring you that I have done with the *kennel:* without doubt, you will think I had good need. If I have made even the name frightful to you, comfort yourself with the thoughts that it will not appear again.

Your criticism on my switches I think unjust. You tell me self-defence would of course make you take that precaution—do you always walk with a whip in your hand, or do you think that a walking-stick, which may be a good thing to knock a dog on the head with, would be equally proper to correct him should he be too familiar? —You forget, however, to put a better substitute in the room of them.—

You desire to know, what kind of hound I would recommend: As you mention not for any particular chace, or country, I understand you generally; and shall answer, that I most approve of hounds of the middle size. I believe all animals of that description are strongest, and best able to endure fatigue. In the height, as well as the co-

lour of hounds, most sportsmen have their prejudices; but in their shape at least, I think they must all agree. I know sportsmen, who boldly affirm, that a small hound will oftentimes beat a large one; that he will climb hills better, and go through cover quicker;—whilst others, are not less ready to assert, that a large hound, will make his way in any country, will get better through the dirt, than a small one; and that no fence, however high, can stop him. You have now three opinions; and I advise you to adopt that which suits your country best: There is, however, a certain size, best adapted for business; which I take to be that between the two extremes, and I will venture to say, that such hounds will not suffer themselves to be disgraced in any country.—Somerville, I find, is of the same opinion.

— — — — "But here a mean
Observe, nor the large hounds prefer, of size
Gigantick; he in the thick-woven covert,
Painfully tugs, or in the thorny brake
Torn and embarrass'd bleeds; But if too small,
The pigmy brood in every furrow swims;
Moil'd in the clogging clay, panting they lag
Behind inglorious; or else shivering creep
Benumb'd and faint beneath the shelt'ring thorn.
For hounds of middle size, active and strong,
Will better answer all thy various ends,
And crown thy pleasing labours with success.

I per-

I perfectly agree with you, that to look well, they should be all nearly of a size, and I even think, they should all look of the same family.——

> "Facies non omnibus una,
> Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororum.."

If handsome withal, they are then perfect. With regard to their being sizeable, what Somervile says, is so much in your own way, that I shall send it you:—

> "As some brave captain, curious and exact,
> By his fix'd standard forms in equal ranks
> His gay battalion, as one man they move
> Step after step, their size the same, their arms
> Far gleaming, dart the same united blaze:
> Reviewing generals his merit own;
> How regular! how just! and all his cares
> Are well repaid, if mighty GEORGE approve.
> So model thou thy pack, if honour touch
> Thy gen'rous soul, and the world's just applause."

There are necessary points in the shape of a hound, which ought always to be attended to by a sportsman; for if he is not of a perfect symmetry, he will neither run fast, nor bear much work: he has much to undergo, and should have strength, proportioned to it.—Let his legs be straight as arrows; his feet round, and not too

too large; his chest deep, and back broad; his head small; his neck thin; his tail thick, and brushy; if he carries it well, so much the better: This last point, however trifling it may appear to you, gave rise to a very odd question: A gentleman (not much acquainted with hounds) as we were hunting together the other day, said, "I "observe, sir, that some of your dog's tails "stand up, and some hang down; pray sir, "which do you reckon *the best hounds*?"—Such young hounds as are out at the elbows, and such as are weak from the knee to the foot, should never be taken into the pack.

I find that I have mentioned a small head, as one of the necessary points about a hound: you will please to understand it as relative to *beauty only*; for as to *goodness*, I believe large-headed hounds are no way inferior. Somerville, in his description of a perfect hound, makes no mention of the head, leaving the size of it to Phidias to determine; he therefore must have thought it of very little consequence. I send you his words:—

> — — — "See there with count'nance blythe,
> And with a courtly grin, the fawning hound
> Salutes the cow'ring, his wide op'ning nose
> Upwards he curls, and his large sloe-black eyes

Melt

Melt in soft blandishments, and humble joy;
His glossy skin, or yellow-pied, or blue,
In lights or shades by nature's pencil drawn,
Reflects the various tints; his ears and legs
Fleckt here and there, in gay enamel'd pride,
Rival the speckled pard; his rush-grown tail
O'er his broad back bends in an ample arch;
On shoulders clean, upright and firm he stands;
His round cat foot, straight hams, and wide-spread thighs
And his low-dropping chest, confess his speed,
His strength, his wind, or on the steepy hill,
Or far extended plain; in every part
So well proportioned, that the nicer skill
Of Phidias himself can't blame thy choice.
Of such compose thy pack."——

The colour, I think the least material of all; and I think with our friend Foote, that a good dog, like a good candidate, cannot be of a bad colour.

Men are too apt to be prejudiced by the sort of hound they themselves have been most accustomed to. Those who have been used to the sharp-nosed fox-hound, will hardly allow a large-headed hound to *be* a fox-hound; yet both equally are fox-hounds—speed and beauty are the chief excellencies of the one; whilst stoutness and tenderness of nose in hunting, are characteristic of the other. I could tell you, that I have seen very good sport with very unhand-

some

some packs, consisting of hounds of various sizes, differing from one another as much in shape and look, as in their colour; nor could I trace the least sign of consanguinity amongst them: considered separately, the hounds were good; as a pack of hounds they were not to be commended; nor could you be satisfied with any thing, that looked so very incomplete.—You will find nothing so essential to your sport, as, that your hounds should run well together; nor can this end be better attained, than by keeping them, as near as you can of the same sort, size, and shape.

A great excellence in a pack of hounds, is the head they carry; and that pack may be said to go the fastest, that can run ten miles the soonest, notwithstanding the hounds, separately, may not run so fast as many others. A pack of hounds considered in a collective body go fast in proportion to the excellence of their noses, and the head they carry; as that traveller generally gets soonest to his journey's end, who stops least upon the road.——Some hounds that I have hunted which would creep all through the same hole, tho' they might have leapt the hedge, and would follow one another in a string, as true as

a team

a team of cart horses.—I had rather see them, like the horses of the sun, *all a-breast.*

A friend of mine killed thirty-seven brace of foxes in one season: twenty-nine of the foxes were killed without any intermission. I must tell you at the same time, that they were killed with hounds bred from a pack of harriers; nor had they, I believe, a single skirter belonging to them. There is a pack now in my neighbourhood, of all sorts and sizes, which seldom miss a fox; when they run, there is a long string of them, and every fault is hit off by an old southern hound. However, out of the last eighteen foxes they hunted, they killed seventeen; and I have no doubt, but as they become more complete, more foxes will escape from them. Packs which are composed of hounds of various kinds, seldom run well together, nor do their tongues harmonize, yet they generally, I think, kill most foxes; but I must confess, that unless I like their style of killing them, whatever may be their success, I cannot be completely satisfied. I once asked the famous Will Crane, how his hounds behaved—"*very well, sir,*" he replied; "*they never come "to a fault, but they spread like a sky-rocket.*"—Thus it should always be.

A famous

The quantity of hounds necessary.

A famous sportsman asked a gentleman what he thought of his hounds—" Your pack is composed, sir," said he, " of dogs which any other man would *hang*;—" they are all *skirters*."—This was taken as a compliment.—However, do not think I recommend it to you as such; for though I am a great advocate for style, in the killing of a fox, yet I never forgive a professed skirter: where game is in plenty, they are always changing, and are the loss of more foxes than they kill.

You ask me, how many hounds you ought to keep? It is a question not easy to answer—from twenty to thirty couple, are as many, I think, as you should ever take into the field. The propriety of any number must depend on the strength of your pack, and the country you are to hunt: The quantity of hounds it may be necessary to keep, to furnish that number for a whole season, must also depend on the country *where* you hunt; as some countries lame hounds more than others. The taking out too many hounds, Mr. Somerville very properly calls *an useless incumbrance.* It is not so material what the number is, as it is that all your hounds should be steady, and as nearly as possible of equal speed.

Too many old hounds should not be kept.

When packs are very large, the hounds are seldom sufficiently hunted, to be good. Few people choose to hunt every day; and if they did, it is not likely the weather in winter, would give them leave. You would always be obliged therefore, either to take out a very large pack, or a great number of hounds must be left behind: in the first case, too many hounds in the field would probably spoil your sport; in the second, hounds that remain for any time without work, always get out of wind, and oftentimes become riotous. About forty couple, I think, will best answer your purpose. Forty couple of hunting hounds will enable you to hunt three, or even four times a week; and I will venture to say, will kill more foxes, than a greater number. Hounds, to be good, must be kept constantly hunted; and if I should hereafter say, a fox-hound should be above his work, it will not be a young fox-hound I shall mean, for I think they should seldom be left at home, as long as they are able to hunt: The old and lame; and such as are low in flesh, you should leave; and such as you are sure, idleness cannot spoil.

It is a great fault to keep too many old hounds:—If you choose your hounds should run well together, you should not keep any longer

than five, or six seasons; though there is no saying, with certainty, what number of seasons a hound will last. Like us, some of them have better constitutions, than others, and consequently will bear more work; and the duration of all bodies, depends as well on the usage they meet with, as on the materials of which they are made.

You ask, whether you had not better buy a complete pack at once, than be at the trouble of breeding one? certainly you had, if such an opportunity should offer. It sometimes happens, that hounds are to be bought for less money than you could breed them. The gentleman, to whom my house formerly belonged, had a most famous pack of fox-hounds. His goods, &c. were appraised and sold; which, when the appraiser had done, he was put in mind of the hounds.—"Well, gentlemen," said he, "what "shall I appraise *them at? a shilling a-piece?*"— "Oh! it is too little!"—"Is it so," said the appraiser; "why it is more than *I would give for* "*them, I assure you.*"——

Hounds are not bought so cheap, *at Tattersall's.*

LETTER IV.

I AM glad you do not disapprove the advantage I have made of my friend Somerville. I was doubtful whether you would not have abused me for it, and have compared me to some of those would-be fine gentlemen, who to cut a figure, tack an embroidered edging on their coarse cloth. —I shall be cautious, however, of abusing your indulgence, and shall not quote my poet oftener than is necessary; but where we think the same thing, you had better take it in his words, than mine.—I shall now proceed in an account of the feeding of hounds; and management of them in the kennel.

A good feeder is an essential part of your establishment.—Let him be young and active; and have the reputation at least, of not disliking work: he should be good-tempered, for the sake of the animals intrusted to his care; and who, however they may be treated by him, cannot complain. He should be one who will strictly obey any orders you may give; as well with regard

gard to the management, as to the breeding of the hounds; and should not be solely under the direction of your huntsman. It is true I have seen it otherwise—I have known a pack of hounds belong, as it were, entirely to the huntsman—a stable of horses belong to the groom—whilst the master had little more power in the direction of either, than a perfect stranger.—This you will not suffer. I know you choose to keep the supreme command in your own hands: and though you permit your servants to remonstrate, you do not suffer them to disobey.—He who allows a huntsman to manage his hounds as he pleases, without controul, literally keeps them for *his* amusement.——You desire to know what is required of a feeder;—I will tell you as well as I can.

As our sport depends entirely on that exquisite sense of smelling, so peculiar to the hound; care must be taken to preserve it: and cleanliness is the surest means. The keeping your kennel *sweet* and *clean*, cannot therefore be too much recommended to the feeder, nor should you on any account, admit the least deviation from it. If he sees *you* exact, he will be so himself,—This is a very essential part of his business.——The boiling for the hounds; mixing of the meat;

and getting it ready for them at proper hours, is what your huntsman will of course take proper care of; nor is it ever likely to be forgotten. I must caution you not to let your dogs have their meat too hot; for I have known it have bad consequences; you should also order it to be mixed up as thick as possible.—When the feeder has cleaned his kennel in the morning, and prepared his meat, it is usual for him on hunting-days, (in an establishment like yours) to exercise the horses of the huntsman and whipper-in; and in many stables it is also the feeder who looks after the huntsman's horse when he comes in from hunting; whilst the huntsman feeds the hounds. When the hounds are not out, the huntsman and whipper-in, of course, will exercise their own horses; and that day, the feeder has little else to mind, but the cleaning of his kennel. Every possible contrivance has been attended to in the plan I sent you, to make that part of his work easy; all the courts, except the grass-one, being bricked, and sloped on purpose. There is also plenty of water, without any trouble in fetching it; and a thorough air through the kennels, to assist in drying them again.—Should you choose to encrease your number of servants in the stable, in that case, the business of the feeder may be confined entirely to the kennel.—

there

there should be always two to feed hounds properly; the feeder and the huntsman.

Somerville strongly recommends cleanliness in the following lines.—

"O'er all let cleanliness preside, no scraps
Bestrew the pavement, and no half-picked bones,
To kindle fierce debate, or to disgust
That nicer sense, on which the sportsman's hope,
And all his future triumphs must depend.
Soon as the prowling pack with eager joy
Have lapp'd their smoking viands, morn or eve,
From the full cistern lead the ductile streams,
To wash thy court well-paved, nor spare thy pains,
For much to health will cleanliness avail.
Seek'st thou for hounds to climb the rocky steep,
And brush th'entangled covert, whose nice scent
O'er greasy fallows, and frequented roads
Can pick the dubious way? Banish far off
Each noisome stench, let no offensive smell
Invade thy wide inclosure, but admit
The nitrous air, and purifying breeze."

Somerville is so perfectly right in this, that if you can make your kennel a visit every day, your hounds will be the better for it; when I have been long absent from mine, I have always perceived a difference in their looks. I shall now take notice of that part of the management of hounds in the kennel, which concerns the huntsman, as well as the feeder.—Your huntsman

must always attend the feeding of the hounds which should be drafted, according to the condition they are in. In all packs, some hounds will feed better than others; some there are that will do with less meat; and it requires a nice eye, and great attention, to keep them all in equal flesh:—it is what distinguishes a good kennel-huntsman, and has its merit.——It is seldom, I think, that huntsmen give this particular all the attention it deserves: they feed their hounds in too great a hurry; and not often, I believe, take the trouble of casting their eye over them, before they begin: and yet, to distinguish, with any nicety, the order a pack of hounds are in, and the different degrees of it, is surely no easy task; and to be done well, requires no small degree of circumspection: You had better not expect your huntsman to be very exact; where precision is required, he will most probably fail.

When I am present myself, I make several drafts. When my huntsman feeds them, he calls them all over by their names, letting in each hound as he is called: it has its use—it uses them to their names, and teaches them to be obedient. Were it not for this, I should disapprove of it entirely; since it certainly requires

more

more coolness and deliberation, to distinguish with precision which are best entitled to precedence, than this method of feeding will admit of; and unless flesh is in great plenty, those that are called in last, may not have a taste of it. To prevent this inconvenience, such as are low in flesh, had better I think, be all drafted off into a separate kennel; by this means, the hounds that require *flesh*, will have an equal share of it. If any are much poorer than the rest, they should be fed again--such hounds cannot be fed too often. If any in the pack are too fat, *they* should be drafted off, and not suffered to fill themselves. The others should eat what they will of the meat. The days my hounds have greens or sulphur, they generally are let in all together; and such as require *flesh*, have it given to them afterwards.—Having a good kennel-huntsman, it is not often I take this trouble; yet I seldom go in to my kennel, but I give myself the pleasure of seeing such hounds fed, as appear to me to be in want of it. I have been told that in one kennel in particular, the hounds are under such excellent management, that they constantly are fed with the door of the feeding-yard open; and the rough nature of the fox-hound is changed into so much politeness, that he waits at the door, till he is invited in; and what

what perhaps is not less extraordinary, he comes out again, whether he has satisfied his hunger or not, the moment he is desired; the effect of severe discipline. But since this is not absolutely necessary, and hounds may be good without it; and since I well know your other amusements will not permit you to attend to all this manœuvring; I would by no means wish you to give such power to your huntsman. The business would be injudiciously done, and most probably would not answer your expectations.—The hound would be tormented mal-a-propos;—an animal so little deserving of it from our hands, that I should be sorry to disturb his hours of repose by unnecessary severity. You will perceive it is a nice affair; and I assure you I know no huntsman who is equal to it. The gentleman who has carried this matter to its utmost perfection, has attended to it regularly himself; has constantly acted on fixed principles; from which he has never deviated, and I believe has succeeded to the very utmost of his wishes.——All hounds, (and more especially young ones) should be called over often in the kennel; and most huntsmen practise this lesson, as they feed their hounds.—They flog them while they feed them—and if they have not always a belly-full one way, they seldom fail to have it the other. It is not, however,

however, my intention to oppose so general a practice, in which there may be some utility; I shall only observe, that it should be used with discretion; lest the whip should fall heavily in the kennel on such as never deserve it in the field.

My hounds are generally fed about eleven o'clock; and if I am present myself, I take the same opportunity to make my draft for the next day's hunting. I seldom, when I can help it, leave this to my huntsman; though it is necessary he should be present when the draft is made, that he may know what hounds he has out.

It is a bad custom to use hounds to the boiling-house, as it is apt to make them nice, and may prevent them from ever eating the kennel-meat. What they have, should always be given them in the feeding-yard, and for the same reason, though it should be flesh, it is better it should have some meal mixed with it.

If your hounds are low in flesh, and have far to go to cover, they may all have a little thin lap again in the evening; but this should never be done if you hunt early. Hounds, I think, should

should be sharp-set before hunting; they run the better for it.

If many of your hounds after long rest should be too fat: by feeding them for a day or two on thinner meat than you give the others, you will find it answer better, I think, than the usual method of giving them the same meat, and stinting them in the quantity of it.

If your hounds are turned into the grass-court to empty themselves after they have been fed, it will contribute not a little to the cleanliness of the kennel.

I have heard that it is a custom in some kennels, to shut up the hounds for a couple of hours after they come in from hunting, before they are fed; and that other hounds are shut up with them, to lick them clean.—*My* usual way is to send a whipper-in on before, that the meat may be got ready against they come, and they are fed *immediately*; and having filled their bellies, they are naturally inclined to rest.—If they have had a severe day, they are fed again some hours after. As to the other method above-mentioned. it may be more convenient perhaps, to have the hounds

hounds all together: but I cannot think it necessary, for the reason that is given; and I should apprehend a parcel of idle hounds shut up amongst such as are tired and inclined to rest, would disturb them more than all their licking would make them amends for. When you feed them twice, they had better be put all together after the second feeding, than the first.

Every day when hounds come in from hunting, they should be carefully looked over, and invalids immediately taken care of. Such as have sore feet, should have them well washed out with brine. If you will permit those hounds that are unable to work, to run about your house, it will be of great service to them.

Every Thursday during the hunting-season, my hounds have one pound of sulphur given them in their meat; and every Sunday throughout the year, they have plenty of greens boiled up with it: I find it better to fix the days, as it is then less liable to be forgotten.—I used to give them the wash from the kitchen, but I found it made them thirsty, and it is now omitted in the hunting-season.—A horse fresh killed, is an excellent meal for hounds after a very hard day; but they should not hunt till the third day after it.—The bones

bones broken, are good food for poor hounds, as there is great proof in them.—Sheep's trotters are very sweet food, and will be of service when horse-flesh is not to be had.—Bullock's bellies may be also of some use if you can get nothing else.—Oatmeal, I believe, makes the best meat for hounds; barley, is certainly the cheapest; and in many kennels they give barley on that account; but it is heating, does not mix up so well, nor is there near so much proof in it, as in oatmeal. If mixed, an equal quantity of each, it will then do very well, but barley alone will not.—Much also depends on the goodness of the meal itself, which, I believe, is not often attended to. If you do not use your own, you should buy a large quantity of it any time before harvest, and keep it by you—there is no other certainty, I believe, of having it *old;* which is more material than, perhaps, you are aware of. I have heard that a famous Cheshire huntsman feeds his hounds with wheat; which he has found out to be the best food. He gives it them with the bran—it would, I believe, cause no little disturbance in many neighbourhoods, if other sportsmen were to do the same.

I am not fond of *bleeding* hounds, unless I see they want it; though it has long been a custom in

in my kennel to physic them twice a year, after they leave off hunting, and before they begin. It is given in hot weather, and at an idle time. It cools their bodies, and without doubt is of service to them. If a hound is in want of physic, I prefer giving it in balls. It is more easy to give him in this manner the quantity he may want, and you are more certain that he takes it. In many kennels, I believe, they also bleed them twice a year, and some people think it prevents madness.—The anointing of hounds, or *dressing* them, as huntsmen call it, makes them fine in their coats: It may be done twice a year, or oftener, if you find it necessary, As I shall hereafter have occasion to write on the diseases of hounds, and their cures, I will send you at the same time a receipt for this purpose. During the summer months when my hounds do not hunt, they have seldom any flesh allowed them; and are kept low, contrary, I believe, to the usual practice of most kennels, where mangey hounds in summer, are but too often seen. Huntsmen sometimes content themselves with checking this disorder, when with less trouble perhaps they might prevent it. A regular course of whey and vegetables during the hot months must certainly be wholesome, and are without

doubt

doubt, the cause that a mangey hound is an unusual sight in my kennel. Every Monday and Thursday my hounds go for whey till the hunting-season begins; are kept out several hours, and are often made to swim through rivers during the hot weather. After their last physic, and before they begin hunting, they are exercised on the turnpike road to harden their feet, which are washed with strong brine, as soon as they come in.—Little straw is necessary during the summer; but when they hunt they cannot have too much, or have it changed too often.—In many kennels they don't boil for the hounds in summer, but give them meal only; in mine it is always boiled; but with this difference, that it is mixed up thin, instead of thick.—Many give spurge-laurel in summer, boiled up in their meat; as I never use it, I cannot recommend it.—The physic I give is two pounds of sulphur, one pound of antimony, and a pint and a-half of syrup of buckthorn, for about forty couple of hounds.—— In the winter season, let your hounds be shut up warm at night. If any hounds after hunting are missing, the straw-house door should be left open; and if they have had a hard day, it may be as well to leave some meat there for them.

I have

Hints on the subject of feeding.

I have enquired of my feeder, who is a very good one, (and has had more experience in these matters than any one you perhaps may get) how he mixes up his meat. He tells me, that in his opinion, oatmeal and barley mixt, an equal quantity of each, make the best meat for hounds. The oatmeal he boils for half an hour, and then puts out the fire, puts the barley into the copper, and mixes both well together. I asked him why, he boiled one and not the other—he told me boiling, which made oatmeal thick, made barley thin; and that when you feed with barley only, it should not be put into the copper, but be scalded with the liquor, and mixed up in a bucket. I find there is in my kennel a large tub on purpose, which contains about half a hogshead.

You little think, perhaps, how difficult it is to be a good kennel-huntsman, nor can you as yet know the nicety that is required in feeding hounds properly. You are not aware that some hounds will hunt best when fed late; others when fed early:—that some should have but little; that others cannot have too much: however, if your huntsman observes the rules I have here laid down, his hounds will not do much amiss; but should you at any time wish to *rencherir* upon the matter, and feed each particular hound so as

Hints on the subject of feeding.

to make the most of him, you must learn it of a gentleman in Leicestershire, to whom the noble science of fox-hunting is more beholden than to any other. I shall myself say nothing further on the subject; for as your huntsman will not have the sense of the gentleman I allude to *there*, nor *you* perhaps his patience, an easier method I know will suit you best. I shall only advise you, while you endeavour to keep your hounds in good order, not to let them get *too fat*: It will be impossible for them to run if they are.—A fat alderman would cut a mighty ridiculous figure were he inclined to run a race.

Of breeding hounds.

LETTER V.

We are now about to treat of the breeding of hounds; and it is the sagacious management of this business on which all our future success depends. Is it not extraordinary, that no other country should equal us in this particular? and that the very hounds procured from hence, should degenerate in a foreign country!

> "In thee alone, fair land of liberty!
> Is bred the perfect hound, in scent and speed
> As yet unrivall'd, while in other climes
> Their virtue fails, a weak degen'rate race."
>
> Somervile.

Happy climate for sportsmen! where nature seems as it were to give them an exclusive privilege of enjoying this diversion. To preserve, however, this advantage, great care should be taken in the breed; I shall therefore, according to your desire, send you such rules as I observe myself.—Consider the size, shape, colour, con-

stitution, and natural disposition of the dog you breed from; as well as the fineness of his nose; his stoutness, and method of hunting. On no account breed from one that is not *stout*, that is not *tender-nosed*, or that is a *skirter*. Somervile enjoins still further:

"Observe with care his shape, sort, colour, size.
Nor will sagacious huntsmen less regard
His inward habits; the vain babbler shun,
Ever loquacious, ever in the wrong,
His foolish offspring shall offend thy ears
With false alarms, and loud impertinence.
Nor less the shifting cur avoid, that breaks
Illusive from the pack; to the next hedge
Devious he strays, there ev'ry muse he tries,
If haply then he cross the streaming scent,
Away he flies vain-glorious; and exults
As of the pack supreme, and in his speed
And strength unrivall'd. Lo! cast far behind
His vex'd associates pant, and lab'ring strain
To climb the steep ascent. Soon as they reach
Th'insulting boaster, his false courage fails,
Behind he lags, doom'd to the fatal noose,
His master's hate, and scorn of all the field.
What can from such be hop'd, but a base brood
Of coward curs, a frantic, vagrant race?".

It is the judicious cross that makes the complete pack. The faults and imperfections in one breed, may be rectified in another; and if

this

this is properly attended to, I see no reason why the breeding of hounds may not improve, till improvement can go no farther. If ever you find a cross hit, always pursue it.—Never put an old dog to an old bitch.—Be careful that they are healthy which you breed from; or you are not likely to have a healthy offspring.—Should a favourite dog skirt a little, put him to a thorough line-hunting bitch, and such a cross may succeed: my objection to the breeding from such a hound is, that as skirting is what most fox-hounds acquire from practice, you had better not make it natural to them. A very famous sportsman has told me, that he freqnently breeds from brothers and sisters:—As I should be very unwilling to urge any thing in opposition to such authority, you had better try it; and if it succeeds in hounds, it is more I believe than it usually does in other animals.—A famous cocker assured a friend of mine, that the third generation, (which he called a nick) he had found to succeed very well, but no nearer: As I have neither tried one nor the other, I cannot speak with any certainty about them.

Give particular orders to your feeder, to watch over the bitches with a cautious eye, and

separate such as are going to be proud, before it is too late. The advances they make frequently portend mischief as well as love; and, if not prevented in time, will not fail to set the whole kennel together by the ears, and may occasion the death of your best dogs: care only can prevent it.—

> "Mark well the wanton females of thy pack,
> That curl their taper tails, and frisking court
> Their pyebald mates enamour'd; their red eyes
> Flash fires impure; nor rest, nor food they take,
> Goaded by furious love. In sep'rate cells
> Confine them now, lest bloody civil wars
> Annoy thy peaceful state.————"
>
> SOMERVILE.

I have known huntsmen perfectly ignorant of the breed of their hounds, from inattention in this particular; and I have also known many a good dog fall a sacrifice to it.

The earlier in the year you breed, the better; January, February, and March, are the best months. Late puppies seldom come to much; if you have any such, put them to the best walks. —When the bitches begin to get big, let them not hunt any more: it proves frequently fatal to the

the whelps; sometimes to the bitch herself; nor is it safe for them to remain much longer in the kennel.—If one bitch has many puppies, more than she can well rear, you may put some of them to another bitch; or if you destroy any of them, you may keep the best-coloured. They sometimes will have an extraordinary number;—I have known an instance of one having fifteen; and a friend of mine, whose veracity I cannot doubt, has assured me that a hound in his pack brought forth sixteen, all alive. When you breed from a very favourite sort, and can have another bitch warded at the same time, it will be of great service, as you may then save all the puppies.—Give particular orders, that the bitches be well fed with flesh; and let the whelps remain till they are well able to take care of themselves: They will soon learn to lap milk, which will relieve the mother.—The bitches, when their whelps are taken away from them, should be physicked; I generally give them three purging balls, one every other morning. If a bitch brings only one or two puppies, and you have another bitch that will take them; by putting the puppies to her, the former will be soon fit to hunt again; she should, however, be physicked first; and if her dugs are anointed with brandy and water, it will also be of service.——The dis-

temper makes dreadful havoc with whelps at their walks; greatly owing, I believe, to the little care that is taken of them there. I am in doubt whether it might not be better to breed them up yourself, and have a kennel on purpose. You have a large orchard paled in, which would suit them exactly; and what else is wanted might easily be obtained. There is, however, an objection that perhaps may strike you:—If the distemper once gets amongst them, they must all have it: yet notwithstanding *that*, as they will be constantly well fed, and will lie warm, I am confident it would be the saving of many lives. If you should adopt this method, you must remember to use them early to go in couples; and when they get of a proper age, they must be walked out often; for should they remain confined, they would neither have the shape, health, or understanding, they ought to have. When I kept harriers, I bred up some of the puppies at a distant kennel; but having no servants there to exercise them properly, I found them much inferior to such of their brethren, as had the luck to survive the many difficulties and dangers they had undergone at their walks; these were afterwards equal to any thing, and afraid of nothing; whilst those that had been nursed with so much

care,

care, were weakly, and timid, and had every disadvantage attending private education.——

I have often heard as an excuse for hounds not hunting a cold scent, that they were *too high bred*——I confess, I know not what that means: but this I know, that hounds are frequently *too ill-bred* to be of any service.——It is judgment in the breeder, and patience afterwards in the huntsman, that make them hunt.

Young hounds are commonly named when first put out, and sometimes indeed ridiculously enough; nor is it easy, when you breed many, to find suitable or harmonious names for all; particularly, as it is usual to name all the whelps of one litter, with the same letter, which (to be systematically done) should also be the initial letter of the dog that got them, or the bitch that bred them. A baronet of my acquaintance, a literal observer of the above rule, sent three young hounds of one litter to a friend, all their names beginning, as *he said* with the letter G. *Gowler*, *Govial*, and *Galloper*.

It is indeed of little consequence what huntsmen call their hounds; yet if you dislike an unmeaning name, would it not be as well to leave the

the naming of them till they are brought home? They soon learn their names, and a shorter list would do.—Damons and Delias would not then be necessary; nor need the sacred names of Titus and Trajan be thus degraded. It is true there are many odd names which custom authorises; yet I cannot think, because some drunken fellow or other, has christened his dog Tipler, or Tapster, that there is the least reason to follow the example. Pipers and Fiddlers, for the sake of their musick, we will not object to; but Tiplers and Tapsters your kennel will be much better without.

However extraordinary you may think it, I can assure you I have myself seen a *white* Gipsey, a *grey* Ruby, a *dark* Snowball, and a Blueman of any colour but *blue*. The huntsman of a friend of mine being asked the name of a young hound, said, "it was *Lyman*." "Lyman! said his master, "why James, what does Lyman mean?" "Lord, sir!" replied James, "what does *any thing mean?*"—A farmer, who bred up two couple of hounds for me, whose names were Merryman, and Merrylass; Ferryman, and Furious; upon my enquiring after them, gave this account:——Merryman and Merrylass are both dead; but "Ferryman sir, is a fine dog, "and

and so is *Ferrylass.*" Madam, an usual name among hounds, is often, I believe, very disrespectfully treated; I had an instance of it the other day in my own huntsman, who after having rated Madam a great deal to no purpose (who to confess the truth, was much given to do otherwise than she should) flew into a violent passion, and hallooed out as loud as he could—*Madam—you d—d bitch!*

As you desire a list of names, I will send you one. I have endeavored to class them according to their different genders; but you will perceive some names may be used indiscriminately for either. It is not usual, I believe, to call a pointer Ringwood, or a greyhound Harmony; and such names as are expressive of speed, strength, courage, or other natural qualities in a hound, I think most applicable to them. Damons and Delias I have left out; the bold Thunder and the brisk Lightning, if you please, may supply their places; unless you prefer the method of the gentleman I told you of, who intends naming his hounds from the p—ge; and, I suppose, he at the same time will not be unmindful of the p—y c——rs.

If you mark the whelps in the side, (which is

 called

called branding them) when they are first put out, (or perhaps it may be better done after they have been out some time,) it may prevent their being stolen.

When young hounds are first taken in, they should be kept separate from the pack; and as it will happen at a time of the year, when there is little or no hunting, you may easily give them up one of the kennels, and grass-court adjoining. Their play ends frequently in a battle; it is therefore less dangerous, where they are all equally matched. What Somervile says on this subject is exceedingly beautiful.—

"But here with watchful and observant eye,
Attend their frolicks, which too often end
In bloody broils and death. High o'er thy head
Wave thy resounding whip, and with a voice
Fierce-menacing o'er-rule the stern debate,
And quench their kindling rage; for oft in sport
Begun, combat ensues, growling they snarl,
Then on their haunches rear'd, rampant they seize
Each other's throats, with teeth, and claws, in gore
Besmear'd, they wound, they tear, 'till on the ground,
Panting, half dead the conquer'd champion lies:
Then sudden all the base ignoble crowd
Loud-clam'ring seize the helpless worried wretch,
And thirsting for his blood, drag diff'rent ways
His mangled carcass on th'ensanguin'd plain.
O breasts of pity void! t'oppress the weak,
To point your vengeance at the friendless head,

And with one mutual cry insult the fallen!
Emblem too just of man's degenerate race."

If you find they take a dislike to any particular hound, the safest way will be to remove him; or it is very probable they will kill him at last. When a feeder hears the hounds quarrel in the kennel, he halloo's to them to stop them. He then goes in amongst them, and flogs every hound he can come near.—How much more reasonable as well as more efficacious would it be, were he to see which were the combatants, before he speaks to them. Punishment would then fall as it ought, on the guilty only. In all packs there are some hounds more quarrelsome than the rest; and it is to them we owe all the mischief that is done. If you find chastisement cannot quiet them, it may be prudent to break their holders; for since they are not necessary to them for the meat they have to eat, they are not likely to serve them in any good purpose.

Young hounds should be fed twice a day, as they seldom take kindly at first to the kennel-meat, and the distemper is very apt to seize them at this time.——It is better not to round them till they are thoroughly settled; nor should it be put off till the hot weather, for then they would

 bleed

bleed too much.—If any of the dogs are thin over the back, or any more quarrelsome than the rest, it will be of use to cut them: I also spay such bitches, as I think I shall not want to breed from; they are more useful, are stouter, and are always in better order:—besides, it is absolutely necessary if you hunt late in the spring; or your pack will be very short for want of it. It may be right to tell you, that the latter operation does not always succeed; it will be necessary therefore to employ a skilful person, and one on whom you can depend; for if it is ill done, though they cannot have puppies, they will go to heat notwithstanding; of which I have known many instances; and that I apprehend would not answer your purpose at any rate.

You ask me what number of young hounds you should breed to keep up your stock? it is a question, I believe, no man alive can answer.—It depends altogether on contingencies. The deficiencies of one year must be made up the next. I should apprehend from thirty to thirty-five couple of old hounds, and from eight to twelve couple of young ones would, one year with another, best suit an establishment which you do not intend should much exceed forty couple. This rule, I think, you should at the same time observe—

serve—never to part with an useful old hound, or enter an unhandsome young one.

I would advise you in breeding, to be as little prejudiced as possible, in favour of your own sort; but send your best bitches to the best dogs, be they where they may.—Those who breed only a few hounds, may by chance have a good pack; whilst those who breed a great many, (if at the same time they understand the business) reduce it to a certainty. You say you wish to see your pack as complete as Mr. M——l's: believe me, my good friend, unless you were to breed as many hounds, it is totally impossible. Those who breed the greatest number of hounds, have a right to expect the best pack; at least it must be their own fault, if they have it not.

NAMES

NAMES OF HOUNDS.

A. *dogs.*

ABLE
Actor
Adamant
Adjutant
Agent
Aider
Aimwell
Amorous
Antic
Anxious
Arbiter
Archer
Ardent
Ardor
Arrogant
Arsenic
Artful
Artist
Atlas
Atom
Auditor
Augur
Awful
Affable
Agile
Airy
Amity
Angry
Animate
Artifice
Audible

A. *bitches.*

Accurate
Active
Actress

B. *dogs.*

Bachelor
Banger
Baffler
Barbarous
Bellman
Bender
Blaster
Bluecap
Blueman
Bluster
Boaster
Boisterous
Bonnyface
Bouncer
Bowler
Bravo
Brawler
Brazen
Brilliant
Brusher
Brutal
Burster
Bustler

B. *bitches.*

Baneful
Bashful
Bawble
Beauteous
Beauty
Beldam
Bellmaid
Blameless
Blithsome
Blowzy
Bluebell
Bluemaid
Bonny
Bonnybell
Bonnylass
Boundless
Brevity
Brimstone
Busy
Buxom

C. *dogs.*

Caitiff
Capital
Captain
Captor
Carol
Carver
Caster
Catcher
Catchpole
Caviller
Cerberus
Challenger
Champion
Charon
Chaser
Chaunter
Chieftain
Chimer
Chirper
Choleric
Claimant
Clamorous
Clangor
Clasher
Climbank
Clinker
Combat
Combatant
Comforter
Comrade
Comus
Conflict
Conqueror
Conquest
Constant
Contest
Coroner
Cottager
Counsellor
Countryman
Courteous
Coxcomb
Craftsman
Crasher
Critic
Critical
Crowner
Cruiser
Crusty
Cryer
Curfew
Currier

C. *bitches.*

Capable
Captious
Careless
Careful
Carnage
Caution
Cautious
Charmer
Chauntress
Chearful

Names of hounds.

Cheerful
Cherriper
Circe
Clarinet
Clio
Comely
Comical
Courtesy
Crafty
Crazy
Credible
Credulous
Croney
Cruel
Curious

D. dogs.

Damper
Danger
Dangerous
Dapper
Dapster
Darter
Dasher
Dashwood
Daunter
Dexterous
Disputant
Downright
Dragon
Dreadnought
Driver
Duster

D. bitches.

Dainty
Daphne
Darling
Dashaway
Dauntless
Delicate
Desperate
Destiny
Dian
Diligent
Docile
Document
Doubtful
Doubtless
Dreadful
Dreadless
Dulcet

E. dogs.

Eager
Earnest
Effort
Elegant
Eminent
Envious
Envoy
Errant
Excellent

E. bitches.

Easy
Echo
Ecstacy
Endless
Energy
Enmity
Essay

F. dogs.

Factor
Factious
Fatal
Fearnought
Ferryman
Fervent
Finder
Firebrand
Flagrant
Flasher
Fleece'm
Fleecer
Flinger
Flippant
Flourisher
Flyer
Foamer
Foiler
Foreman
Foremost
Foresight
Forester
Forward
Fulminant
Furrier

F. bitches.

Faithful
Fairmaid
Fairplay
Famous
Fanciful
Fashion
Favorite
Fearless
Festive
Fickle
Fidget
Fireaway
Firetail
Flighty
Flourish
Flurry
Forcible
Fretful
Friendly
Frisky
Frolic
Frolicsome
Funnylass
Furious
Fury

G. dogs.

Gainer
Gallant
Galliard
Galloper
Gamboy
Gamester
Garrulous
General
Genius
Gimcrack
Giant
Glancer
Glider
Glorious
Goblin
Governor
Grapler
Grasper
Griper
Growler
Grumbler
Guider

G. bitches.

Galley
Gambol
Gamesome
Gayety
Gayly
Gaylass
Ghastly
Giddy
Gladness
Gladsome
Governess
Graceful
Graceless
Gracious
Grateful
Gravity
Guilesome
Guilty

H. dogs.

Hannibal
Harbinger
Hardiman
Hardy
Harlequin
Harrasser
Havock
Hazard
Headstrong
Hearty
Hector
Heedful
Hercules
Hero
Highflyer
Hopeful
Hotspur
Humbler
Hurtful

Names of hounds.

H. *bitches.*
Hasty
Handsome
Harlot
Harmony
Hazardous
Heedless
Hellen
Heroine
Hideous
Honesty
Hostile

I. *dogs.*
Jerker
Jingler
Impetus
Jocky
Jolly
Jolly-boy
Jostler
Jovial
Jubal
Judgment
Jumper

I *bitches.*
Jealousy
Industry
Jollity
Joyful
Joyous

L. *dogs.*
Laborer
Larum
Lasher
Launcher
Leader
Leveller
Liberal
Libertine
Lictor
Lifter
Lightfoot
Linguist
Listener
Lounger
Lucifer
Lunatic
Lunger
Lurker
Lusty

L. *bitches.*
Lacerate
Laudable
Lavish
Lawless
Lenity
Levity
Liberty
Lightning
Lightsome
Likely
Lissome
Litigate
Lively
Lofty
Lovely
Luckylass
Lunacy

M. *dogs.*
Manager
Manful
Mareschal
Marksman
Marplot
Martial
Marvellous
Matchem
Maxim
Maximus
Meanwell
Medler
Menacer
Mendall
Mender
Mentor
Mercury
Merlin
Merryboy
Merryman
Messmate
Methodist
Mighty
Militant
Minikin
Miscreant
Mittimus
Monarch
Monitor
Motley
Mounter
Mover
Mungo
Musical
Mutinous
Mutterer
Myrmidon

M. *bitches.*
Madcap
Magic
Matchless
Melody
Merrylass
Mindful
Minion
Miriam
Mischief
Modish
Monody
Music

N. *dogs.*
Nervous
Nestor
Nettler
Newsman
Nimrod
Noble
Nonsuch
Novel
Noxious

N. *bitches.*
Narrative
Neatness
Needful
Negative
Nicety
Nimble
Noisy
Notable
Notice
Notion
Novelty
Novice

P. *dogs.*
Pæan
Pageant
Paragon
Paramount
Partner
Partyman
Pealer
Penetrant
Perfect
Perilous
Pertinent
Petulant
Phœbus
Piercer
Pilgrim
Pillager
Pilot
Pincher
Piper
Playful
Plodder
Plunder
Politic
Potent
Prater
Prattler
Premier
President
Presto
Prevalent
Primate

Names of hounds.

Principal
Prodigal
Prowler
Prompter
Prophet
Prosper
Prosperous
Pryer

P. *bitches.*

Passion
Pastime
Patience
Phœnix
Phrenetic
Phrenzy
Placid
Playful
Pleasant
Pliant
Positive
Precious
Prettylass
Previous
Priestess
Probity
Prudence

R. *dogs.*

Racer
Rager
Rallywood
Rambler
Ramper
Rampant
Rancour
Random
Ranger
Ransack
Rantaway
Ranter
Rapper
Ratler
Ravager
Ravenous
Reacher
Reasoner
Rector
Regent
Render
Resonant
Restive
Reveler
Rifler
Rigid
Rigour
Ringwood
Rioter
Risker
Rockwood
Romper
Rouser
Router
Rover
Rudesby
Ruffian
Ruffler
Ruler
Rumager
Rumbler
Rumour
Runner
Rural
Rusher
Rustic

R. *bitches.*

Racket
Rally
Rantipole
Rapid
Rapine
Rapture
Rarity
Rashness
Rattle
Reptile
Resolute
Restless
Rhapsody
Riddance
Riot
Rival
Roguish
Ruin
Rummage
Ruthless

S. *dogs.*

Salient
Sampler
Sampson
Sanction
Sapient
Saucebox
Saunter
Scalper
Scamper
Schemer
Scourer
Scramble
Screamer
Screecher
Scuffler
Searcher
Settler
Sharper
Shifter
Signal
Singer
Singwell
Skirmish
Smoker
Social
Solomon
Solon
Songster
Sonorous
Soundwell
Spanker
Special
Specimen
Spinner
Splendor
Splenetic
Spoiler
Spokesman
Sportsman
Squabbler
Squeaker
Statesman
Steady
Stickler
Stringer
Stormer
Stranger
Stripling
Striver
Strivewell
Stroker
Stroller
Struggler
Sturdy
Subtile
Succour
Suppler
Surly
Swaggerer
Sylvan

S. *bitches.*

Sanguine
Sappho
Science
Scrupulous
Shrewdness
Skilful
Songstress
Specious
Speedy
Spiteful
Spitfire
Sportful
Sportive
Sportly
Sprightly
Stately
Stoutness
Strenuous
Strumpet
Surety
Sybil
Symphony

T. *dogs.*

Tackler
Talisman
Tamer
Tangent
Tartar
Tatler

Names of hounds.

Taunter	Trueman	Troublesome	Vehement	Wildair
Teaser	Trudger	Truelass	Vengeance	Wildman
Terror	Trusty	Truemaid	Vengeful	Wilful
Thrasher	Tryal	Tunable	Venomous	Wisdom
Threatner	Tryer	Tuneful	Venturesome	Woodman
Thumper	Trywell	V. *dogs.*	Venus	Worker
Thunderer	Tuner	Vagabond	Verify	Workman
Thwacker	Turbulent	Vagrant	Verity	Worthy
Thwarter	Twanger	Valiant	Vicious	Wrangler
Tickler	Twig'em	Valid	Victory	Wrestler
Tomboy	Tyrant	Valorous	Victrix	W. *bitches.*
Topmost		Valour	Vigilance	Waggery
Topper	T. *bitches.*	Vaulter	Violent	Waggish
Torment	Tattle	Vaunter	Viperous	Wagtail
Torrent	Telltale	Venture	Virulent	Wanton
Torturer	Tempest	Venturer	Vitiate	Warfare
Tosser	Tentative	Venturous	Vivid	Warlike
Touchstone	Termagant	Vermin	Vixen	Waspish
Tracer	Terminate	Vexer	Vocal	Wasteful
Tragic	Terrible	Victor	Volatile	Watchful
Trampler	Testy	Vigilant	Voluble	Welcome
Transit	Thankful	Vigorous	W. *dogs.*	Welldone
Transport	Thoughtful	Vigour	Wanderer	Whimsey
Traveller	Tidings	Villager	Warbler	Whirligig
Trimbush	Toilsome	Viper	Warning	Wildfire
Trimmer	Tractable	Volant	Warrior	Willing
Triumph	Tragedy	Voucher	Warwhoop	Wishful
Trojan	Trespass		Wayward	Wonderful
Trouncer	Trifle	V. *bitches.*	Wellbred	Worry
Truant	Trivial	Vanquish	Whipster	Wrathful
Trueboy	Trollop	Vehemence	Whynot	Wreakful

LETTER VI.

After the young hounds have been rounded, and are well reconciled to the kennel, know the huntsman, and begin to know their names, they should be put into couples, and walked out amongst the sheep.

If any are particularly snappish, and troublesome, you should leave the couples loose about their necks in the kennel, till you find they are more reconciled to them. If any are more stubborn than the rest, you should couple them to old hounds, rather than to young ones; and you should not couple *two dogs* together when you can avoid it. Young hounds are awkward at first; I should therefore advise you to send out a few only at a time with your people on foot; they will soon afterwards become handy enough to follow a horse, and care should be taken that the couples be not too loose, lest they should slip their necks out of the collar, and give trouble in the catching of them again.

When they have been walked often in this manner amongst the sheep, you may then uncouple a few at a time, and begin to chastise such as offer to run after them; but you will soon find that the cry of *ware sheep*, will stop them sufficiently, without the whip; and the less this is used, the better. With proper care and attention you will soon make them ashamed of it, but if once suffered to taste the blood, you may find it difficult to reclaim them afterwards. Various are the methods used to break such dogs from sheep; some will couple them to a ram, but that is breaking them with a vengeance; you had better hang them.—A late lord of my acquaintance, who had heard of this method, and whose whole pack had been often guilty of killing sheep, determined to punish them, and to that intent put the largest ram he could find into his kennel. The men with their whips and voices, and the ram with his horns, soon put the whole kennel into confusion and dismay, and the hounds and ram were then left together. Meeting a friend soon after, "come," says he, "come with me "to the kennel, and see what rare sport the ram "makes among the hounds; the old fellow lays "about him stoutly, I assure you—egad he trims "them—there is not a dog dares look him in the "face."—His friend, who is a compassionate man,

man, pitied the hounds exceedingly, and asked if he was not afraid that some of them might be spoiled—" No, d—n them," said he, " they " deserve it, and let them suffer."—On they went —all was quiet—they opened the kennel door, but saw neither ram nor hound.—The ram by this time was entirely eaten up, and the hounds having filled their bellies, were retired to rest.

It without doubt is best when you air your hounds, to take them out separately; the old ones one day, another day the young; but as I find your hounds are to have their whey at a distant dairy, on those days both old and young may be taken out together, observing only to take the young hounds in couples, when the old ones are along with them. Young hounds are always ready for any kind of mischief, and idleness might make even old ones too ready to join them in it. Besides, should they break off from the huntsman, the whipper-in is generally too ill-mounted at this season of the year, easily to head them, to bring them back. Run no such risk. My hounds were near being spoiled by the mere accident of a horse's falling. The whipper-in was thrown from his horse. The horse ran away, and the whole pack followed him. A flock of sheep, which were at a little distance,

 took

took fright, began to run, and the hounds pursued them. The most vicious set on the rest, and several sheep were soon pulled down, and killed. I mention this to shew you what caution is necessary whilst hounds are idle; for though the fall of the horse was not to be attributed to any fault of the man, yet had the old hounds been taken out by themselves, or had all the young ones been in couples it is probable so common an accident would not have produced so extraordinary an event.

It is now time to stoop them to a scent.—— You had better enter them at their own game— it will save you much trouble afterwards. Many dogs, I believe, like that scent best which they were first blooded to; but be that as it may, it is certainly most reasonable to use them to that which it is intended they should hunt. It may not be amiss when they first begin to hunt, to put light collars on them. Young hounds may easily get out of their knowledge; and shy ones, after they have been much beaten, may not choose to return home. Collars, in that case, may prevent their being lost.

You say, you should like to see your young hounds run a trail-scent.—I have no doubt that you

you would be glad to see them run over an open down, where you could so easily observe their action, and their speed. I do not think the doing of it once or twicc could hurt your hounds; and yet as a sportsman, I dare not recommend it to you. All that I shall say of it is, that it is less bad than entering them *at hare.* A cat is as good a trail as any; but on no account should any trail be used after your hounds are stooped to a scent.

I know an old sportsman, a clergyman, who enters his young hounds first at a cat, which he drags along the ground for a mile or two, at the end of which he turns out a badger, first taking care to break his teeth; he takes out about two couple of old hounds along with the young ones to hold them on. He never enters his young hounds but at vermin; for he says, "*train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*"

Summer hunting, though useful to young hounds, is prejudicial to old ones; I think therefore you will do well to reserve some of the best of your draft-hounds to enter your young hounds with selecting such as are most likely to set them a good example. I need not tell you they should

not be skirters; but, on the contrary, should be fair hunting hounds, such as love a scent, and that hunt closest on the line of it; it will be necessary that some of them should be good finders, and all must be steady: Thus you procure for your young hounds the best instructions, and at the same time prevent two evils, which would necessarily ensue, were they taught by the whole pack; one, that of corrupting, and getting into scrapes, such as are not much wiser than themselves; and the other, that of occasioning much flogging and rateing, which always shies and interrupts the hunting of an old hound. An old hound is a sagacious animal, and is not fond of trusting himself in the way of an enraged whipper-in, who, as experience has taught him, can flog, and can flog unjustly——By attending to this advice, you will improve one part of your pack, without any injury to the other; whilst such as never separate their young hounds from the old, are not likely to have any of them steady.

You ask, at what time you shall begin to enter your young hounds?—that question is easily answered; for you certainly should begin with them *as soon as you can.* The time must vary in different countries: In corn countries it may not be

possible

possible to hunt till after the corn is cut; in grass countries you may begin sooner; and in woodlands you may hunt as soon as you please.—If you have plenty of foxes, and can afford to make a sacrifice of some of them for the sake of making your young hounds steady, take them first where you have least riot, putting some of the steadiest of your old hounds amongst them. If in such a place you are fortunate enough to find a litter of foxes, you may assure yourself you will have but little trouble with your young hounds afterwards.

Such young hounds as are most riotous at first, generally speaking, I think, are best in the end. A gentleman in my neighbourhood was so thoroughly convinced of this, that he complained bitterly of a young pointer to the person who gave it him, because he had done *no mischief.* However, meeting the same person some time after, he told him the dog he believed would prove a good one at last.—" How so," replied his friend, " it was but the other day that you said he was good for nothing." *True—but he " has killed me nineteen turkies since that."*

If owing to a scarcity of foxes you should stoop your hounds at hare, let them not have the blood

of

of her at least; nor, for the sake of consistency, give them much encouragement. Hare-hunting has one advantage—hounds are chiefly in open ground, where you can easily command them; but, notwithstanding that, if foxes are in tolerable plenty, keep them to their own game, and do not forget the advice of my friend the doctor.

Frequent *hallooing* is of use, I think, with young hounds; it keeps them forward, prevents their being lost, and hinders them from hunting after the rest. The oftener therefore a fox is seen and hallooed, the better; it serves to let them in, makes them eager, makes them exert themselves, and teaches them to be handy. I must tell you, at the same time I say this, that I by no means approve of much hallooing to old hounds; and though I frequently am guilty of it myself, it is owing to my spirits, which lead me into an error that my judgment condemns. It is true, there is a time when hallooing is of use; a time when it does hurt; and a time when it is perfectly indifferent; but it is long practice, and great attention to hunting, that must teach you the application.

Hounds, at their first entering, cannot be encouraged

couraged too much. When they are become handy, love a scent, and begin to know what is *right*, it will be soon enough to chastise them for doing *wrong*; in which case one severe beating will save a deal of trouble. You should recommend to your whipper-in, when he flogs a hound, to make use of his voice as well as his whip, and let him remember, that the smack of the whip is often of as much use as the lash, to one that has felt it. If any are very unsteady, it will not be amiss to send them out by themselves, when the men go out to exercise their horses. If you have hares in plenty, let some be found sitting, and turned out before them, and you will soon find the most riotous will not run after them. If they are to be made steady from deer, they should see them often, and they will not regard them; and if, after a probation of this kind, you turn out a cub before them, with some old hounds to lead them on, you may assure yourself they will not be unsteady long; for as Somerville rightly observes,

> "Easy the lessons of the youthful train,
> When instinct prompts, and when example guides."

Flogging hounds in kennel, the frequent practice of most huntsmen, I hold in abhorrence: it is unreasonable,

unreasonable, unjust, and cruel; and, carried to the excess we sometimes see it, is a disgrace to humanity. Hounds that are old offenders, that are very riotous, and at the same time very cunning, may be difficult to catch: such hounds may be excepted—they deserve punishment whenever it happens, and you should not fail to give it them *when you can.*——This you will allow is a particular case, and necessity may excuse it—— but let not the peace and quiet of your kennel be often thus disturbed. When your hounds offend, punish them:—when caught in the fact, then let them suffer—and if you are severe, at least be just.

When your young hounds stoop to a scent, are become handy, know a rate, snd stop easily, you may then begin to put them into the pack, a few only at a time; nor do I think it adviseable to begin this, till the pack have been out a few times by themselves, and are got well in blood. I should also advise you to take them the first day where they are most sure to find; as long rest makes all hounds riotous, and they may do that *en gaité de cœur*, which they would not think of at another time.

If

The use of the strait horn recommended.

If your covers are large, you would find the strait horn of use, and I am sorry to hear you do not approve of it. You ask me why I like it? —not as a musician, I can assure you.—It signifies little, in our way, what the noise is, as long as it is understood.

The subject resumed.

LETTER VII.

UNLESS I had kept a regular journal of all that has been done in the kennel from the time when my young hounds were first taken in, to the end of the last season, it would be impossible, I think, to answer all the questions which, in your last letter, you ask concerning them. I wish that a memory, which is far from being a good one, may enable me to give the information you desire. If I am to be more circumstantial than in my former letter, I must recollect, as well as I can, the regular system of my own kennel; and if I am to write from memory, you will, without doubt, excuse the *lucidus ordo* which may be wanting—it shall be my endeavour, that the information these letters contain, shall not mislead you.

You desire me to explain what I mean by hounds being *handy*—It relates to their readiness to do whatever is required of them; and particularly,

cularly, when cast, to turn easily which way the huntsman pleases.

I was told the other day by a sportsman, that he considers the management of hounds as a regular system of education, from the time when they are first taken into the kennel: I perfectly agree with that gentleman; and am well convinced that if you expect sagacity in your hound when he is old, you must be mindful what instruction he receives from you in his youth; for as, he is of all animals the most docile, he is also most liable to bad habits. A diversity of character, constitution, and disposition, are to be observed among them; which, to be made the most of, must be carefully attended to, and treated differently. I do not pretend to have succeeded in it myself; yet you will perceive, perhaps, that I have paid some attention to it.

I begin to hunt my young hounds in August. The employment of my huntsman the preceding months, is to keep his old hounds healthy and quiet, by giving them proper exercise, and to get his young hounds forward. They are called over often in the kennel; it uses them to their names, to the huntsman, and to the whipper-in. They are walked out often among sheep, hares, and deer;

deer; it uses them to a rate. Sometimes he turns down a cat before them, which they hunt up to and kill; and, when the time of hunting approaches, he turns out badgers or young foxes, taking out some of the steadiest of his old hounds to lead them on—this teaches them to hunt. He draws small covers and furze brakes with them, to use them to a halloo, and to teach them obedience. If they find improper game, and hunt it, they are stopped and brought back; and as .ong as they will stop at a rate, they are not chastised. Obedience is all that is required of them, till they have been sufficiently taught the game they are to hunt. An obstinate deviation from it afterwards is *never pardoned.* It is an observation of the marchese Beccaria, that, "La "certezza di un castigo, benche moderato fara "sempre una maggiore impressione, che non il ti-"more di un altro piu terribile, unito colla spe-"ranza, della 'impunita."

When my young hounds are taken out to air, my huntsman takes them into the country in which they are to begin to hunt. It is attended with this advantage; they acquire a knowledge of the country, and when left behind at any time, cannot fail to find their way home more easily.

When

When they begin to hunt, they are first taken into a large cover of my own, which has many ridings cut in it; and where young foxes are turned out every year on purpose for them. *Here* it is they are taught the scent they are to hunt, are encouraged to pursue it, and are stopped from every other. *Here* they are blooded to fox. I must also tell you, that as foxes are plentiful in this cover, the principal earth is not stopped, and the foxes are checked back, or some of them let in, as may best suit the purpose of blooding. After they have been hunted a few days in this manner, they are then sent to distant covers, and more old hounds are added to them; there they continue hunting till they are taken into the pack, which is seldom later than the beginning of September; for by that time they will have learned what is required of them, and they seldom give much trouble afterwards. In September, I begin to hunt in earnest, and after the old hounds have killed a few foxes, the young hounds are put into the pack, two or three couple at a time, till all have hunted. They are then divided; and as I seldom have occasion to take in more than nine or ten couple, one half are taken out one day, the other half the next, till all are steady.

Two other methods of entering young hounds

 I have

I have practised occasionally, as the number of hounds have required; for instance, when that number is very considerable, I make a large draft of my steadiest hounds, which are kept with the young hounds in a separate kennel, and are hunted with them all the fore part of the season. This, when the old hounds begin to hunt, makes two distinct packs, and is always attended with great trouble and inconvenience. Nothing hurts a pack so much as to enter many young hounds, since it must weaken it considerably by robbing it of those which are the most steady; and yet young hounds can do nothing without their assistance. Such, therefore, as constantly enter their young hounds in this manner, will, sometimes at least, have two indifferent packs, instead of one good one.

In the other method, the young hounds are well awed from sheep, but never stooped to a scent, till they are taken out with the pack; they are then taken out a few only at a time; and if your pack is perfectly steady, and well manned, may not give you much trouble. The method I first mentioned, which is the one I most commonly practise, will be necessary when you have many young hounds to enter; when you have only a few, the last will be most convenient. The other, which requires two distinct packs, is

on

on too extensive a plan to suit your establishment, requiring more horses and hounds than you intend to keep.

Though I have mentioned, in a former letter, from eight to twelve couple of young hounds, as a sufficient number to keep up your pack to its present establishment, yet it is always best to keep a few couple more than you want in reserve, in case of accidents: since from the time you make your draft, to the time of hunting, is a long period; and their existence at that age and season very precarious: besides, when they are safe from the disorder, they are not always safe from each other; and a summer, I think, seldom passes without some losses of that kind. At the same time I must tell you, that I should decline the entering of more than are necessary to keep up the pack, since a greater number would only create useless trouble and vexation.

You wish to know what number of old hounds you should hunt with the young ones:—that must depend on the strength of your pack, and the number which you choose to spare; if good and steady, ten or twelve couple will be sufficient.

The young hounds, and such old ones as are

 intended

intended to hunt along with them, should be kept in a kennel by themselves, till the young hounds are hunted with the pack. I need not, I am sure, enumerate the many reasons that make *this regulation* necessary.

I never trust my young hounds in the forest till they have been well blooded to fox, and seldom put more than a couple into the pack at a time. The others are walked out amongst the deer, when the men exercise their horses, and are severely chastised if they take any notice of them. They also draw covers with them; choosing out such, where they can best see their hounds, and most easily command them, and where there is the least chance to find a fox. On these occasions I had rather they should have to rate their hounds than to encourage them. It requires less judgment; and, if improperly done, is less dangerous in its consequences. One halloo of encouragement to a wrong scent, more than undoes all that you have been doing.

When young hounds begin to love a scent, it may be of use to turn out a badger before them; you will then be able to discover what improvement they have made; I mention a badger, on a supposition that young foxes cannot so well be

spared;

spared; besides the badger, being a slower animal, he may easily be followed, and driven the way you choose he should run.

The day you intend to turn out a fox, or badger, you will do well to send them amongst hares, or deer. A little rating and flogging, before they are encouraged to vermin, is of the greatest use, as it teaches them both what they should, and what they should not do; I have known a badger run several miles, if judiciously managed; for which purpose he should be turned out in a very open country, and followed by a person who has more sense than to ride on the line of him. If he does not meet with any cover or hedge in his way, he will keep on for several miles; if he does, you will not be able to get him any farther.——You should give him a great deal of law, and you will do well to break his teeth.

If you run any cubs to ground in an indifferent country, and do not want blood, bring them home, and they will be of use to your young hounds. Turn out bag foxes to your young hounds, but never to your old ones. I object to them on many accounts; but of bag-foxes I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

 The

Method of chastising them in the kennel.

The day after your hounds have had blood, is also a proper time to send them where there is riot, and to chastise them if they deserve it: it is always best to correct them when they cannot help knowing what they are corrected for. When you send out your hounds for this purpose, the later they go out, I think the better, as the worse the scent is, the less inclinable will they be to run it, and of course will give less trouble in stopping them. It is a common practice with huntsmen to flog their hounds most unmercifully in the kennel: I have already told you I like it not; but if many of your hounds are obstinately riotous, you may with less impropriety put a live hare into the kennel to them; flogging them as often as they approach her; they will then have some notion at least, for what they are beaten: but, let me intreat you, before this *chaviari* begins, to draft off your steady hounds: An animal to whom we owe so much good diversion, should not be ill used unnecessarily.—When a hare is put into the kennel, the huntsman and both the whippers-in should be present, and the whippers-in should flog every hound, calling him by his name, and rating him as often as he is near the hare, and upon this occasion they cannot cut them too hard, or rate them too much; when they think they have chastised them enough, the

hare

hare should then be taken away, the huntsman should halloo off his hounds, and the whippers-in should rate them to him.——If any one loves hare more than the rest, you may tie a dead one round his neck, flogging him and rating him at the same time. This possibly may make him ashamed of it. I never bought a lot of hounds in my life that were not obliged to undergo this discipline;--either hares are less plentiful in other countries, or other sportsmen are less nice in making their hounds steady from them.

I would advise you to hunt your large covers with your young hounds; it will tire them out; a necessary step towards making them steady; and will open the cover against the time you begin in earnest, and by disturbing the large covers early in the year, foxes will be shy of them in the season, and shew you better chaces: besides, as they are not likely to break from thence, you can do no hurt to the corn, and may begin before it is cut.

If your hounds are very riotous, and you are obliged to stop them very often from hare, it will be advisable, I think, to try on (however late it may be) till you find a fox, as the giving them encourage-

encouragement should, at such a time, prevail over every other consideration.

Though all young hounds, I believe, are given to riot, yet the better they are bred, the less trouble will they be likely to give you. Pointers, well-bred, stand naturally; and high-bred fox-hounds love their own game best. Such, however, as are very riotous, should have little rest: you should hunt them one day in large covers, where foxes are in plenty; the next day they should be walked out mongst hares and deer, and stopped from riot; the day following be hunted again as before. Old hounds, that I have had from other packs (particularly such as have been entered at hare) I have sometimes found incorrigible; but I never yet knew a young hound so riotous, but, by this management, he soon became steady.

When hounds are rated, and do not answer the rate, they should be coupled up immediately, and be made to know the whipper-in: in all probability this method will save any farther trouble. These fellows sometimes flog hounds unmercifully, and some of them seek to take pleasure in

their

their cruelty; I am sure, however, I need not desire you to prevent the excess of it.

I have heard, that no fox-hounds will break off to deer, after once a fox is found.—I cannot say the experience I have had of this diversion will any ways justify the remark; let me advise you therefore to seek a surer dependance. Before you hunt your young hounds where hares are in plenty, let them be awed, and stopped from hare: before you hunt amongst deer, let them not only see deer, but let them draw covers where deer are; for you must not be surprized, if, after they are so far steady, as not to run them in view, they should challenge on the scent of them. Unless you take this method with your young hounds, before you put them into the pack, you will run a great risque of corrupting such as are steady, and will lose the pleasure of hunting with steady hounds. I have already told you that after my young hounds *are* taken into the pack, I still take out but very few at a time, when I hunt among deer. I also change them when I take out others; for the steadiness they may have acquired could be but little depended on, were they to meet with any encouragement to be riotous.

I confess I think first impressions of more consequence

sequence than they are in general thought to be: I not only enter my young hounds to vermin on that account, but I even use them, as early as I can, to the strongest covers and thickest brakes, and I seldom find they are ever shy of them afterwards. A friend of mine has assured me, that he once entered a spaniel to snipes, and the dog, ever after was partial to them, preferring them to every other bird.

If you have martern cats within your reach, as all hounds are fond of their scent, you will do well to enter your young hounds in covers which they frequent. The martern cat being a small animal, by running the thickest breaks it can find, teaches hounds to run cover, and is therefore of the greatest use.——I do not much approve of hunting them with the old hounds; they shew but little sport, are continually climbing trees; and as the cover they run seldom fails to scratch and tear hounds considerably, I think you might be sorry to see your whole pack disfigured by it. The agility of this little animal is really wonderful; and though it falls frequently from a tree, in the midst of a whole pack of hounds, all intent on catching it, there are but few instances, I believe, of a martern's being caught by them in that situation.

In summer, hounds might hunt in an evening; —I know a pack, that after having killed one fox in the morning with the young hounds, killed another in the evening with the old ones. Scent generally lies well at the close of the day, yet there is a great objection to hunting at that time; animals are then more easily disturbed, and you have a greater variety of scents than at an earlier hour.

Having given you all the information I can possibly recollect with regard to my own management of young hounds, I shall now take notice of that part of your last letter, where I am sorry to find that our opinions differ.—Obedience, you say, is every thing necessary in a hound, and that it is of little consequence by what means it is obtained. I cannot concur altogether in that opinion; for I think it very necessary, that the hound should at the same time understand you. Obedience, under proper management, will be a necessary consequence of it. Obedience, surely, is not all that is required of them: they should be taught to distinguish of themselves right from wrong, or I know not how they are to be managed; when, as it frequently happens, we cannot see what they are at, and must take their words for it. A hound that hears a voice which has

has often rated him, and that hears the whip he has often felt, I know, will stop.—I also know, he will commit the same fault again, if he has been accustomed to be guilty of it.

Obedience, you very rightly observe, is a necessary quality in a hound, for he is useless without it. It is therefore an excellent principle, for a huntsman to set out upon; yet, good as it is, I think it may be carried too far. I would not have him insist on too much, or torment his hounds, *mal à propos*, by exacting of them by force what is not absolutely necessary to your diversion. You say, he intends to enter your hounds at hare—is it to teach them obedience?—Does he mean to encourage vice in them, to correct it afterwards?——I have heard, indeed, that the way to make hounds steady from hare, is to enter them at hare: that is,—to encourage them to hunt her. It requires more faith than I pretend to, to believe so strange a paradox.

It concerns me to be obliged to differ from you in opinion; but since it cannot now be helped, we will pursue the subject, and examine it throughout; permit me then to ask you, what it is you propose from the entering of your hounds at hare? Two advantages, I shall presume, you expect

expect from it:—The teaching of your hounds to hunt, and teaching them to be obedient.——However necessary you may think these requisites in a hound, I cannot but flatter myself they are to be acquired by less exceptionable means. The method I have already mentioned to make hounds obedient, as it is practised in my own kennel—that of calling them over often in the kennel, to use them to their names, and walking them out often amongst sheep, hares, and deer, from which they are stopped to use them to a rate, in my opinion, would answer your purpose better. The teaching your hounds to hunt is by no means so necessary as you seem to imagine. *Nature* will teach it them, nor need you give yourself so much concern about it. *Art* only will be necessary to prevent them from hunting what they ought *not to hunt*—and do you really think your method a proper one to accomplish it?

The first and most essential thing towards making hounds obedient, I suppose, is to make them understand you; nor do I apprehend you will find any difficulty on their parts, but such as may be occasioned on yours. The language we use to them, to convey our meaning should never vary:—still less, should we alter the very meaning of the terms we use.——Would it not be absurd to

encourage,

encourage, when we mean to rate? and if we did, could we expect to be obeyed?—You will not deny this, and yet you are guilty of no less an inconsistency, when you encourage your hounds to run a scent to-day, which you know, at the same time, you must be obliged to break them from to-morrow:—is it not running counter to justice and to reason?

I confess there is some use in hunting young hounds, where you can easily command them; but even this you may pay too dearly for. Enter your hounds in small covers, or in such large ones as have ridings cut in them; whippers-in can then get at them, can always see what they are at, and I have no doubt that you may have a pack of fox-hounds steady to fox by this means, without adopting so preposterous a method as that of first making hare-hunters of them. You will find, that hounds, thus instructed what game they are to hunt, and what they are not, will stop at a word; because they will understand you; and, after they have been treated in this manner, a smack only of the whip, will spare you the inhumanity of cutting your hounds in pieces (not very justly) for faults which you yourself have encouraged them to commit.

I think,

I think, in your last letter, you seem very anxious to get your young hounds well-blooded to fox, at the same time that you talk of entering them at hare. How am I to reconcile such contradictions? If the blood of fox is of so much use, surely you cannot think the blood of hare a matter of indifference, unless you should be of opinion that a fox is better eating.—Nature, I suppose, never intended they should hunt sheep, yet we very well know, when once they have killed sheep, that they have no dislike to mutton afterwards.

You have conceived an idea, perhaps, that a fox-hound is designed by nature to hunt a fox. Yet, surely, if that was your opinion, you would never think of entering him at any other game. I cannot, however, think nature designed the dog, which we call a fox-hound, to hunt fox only, since we know he will also hunt other animals. That a well-bred fox-hound may give a preference to vermin, cæteris paribus, I will not dispute: I think it very possible he may; but this I am certain of—that every fox-hound will leave a bad scent of fox, for a good one of either hare or deer, unless he has been made steady from them; and in this, I shall not fear to be contradicted. But, as I do not wish to enter abstruse reasoning with you, or think it any ways material to our pre- sent

sent purpose, whether the dogs we call fox-hounds were originally designed by nature to hunt fox or not, we will drop the subject. I must at the same time beg leave to observe, that dogs are not the only animals in which an extraordinary diversity of species has happened since the days of Adam. Yet a great naturalist tells us, that man is nearer, by eight degrees, to Adam, than is the dog to the first dog of his race; since the age of man is fourscore years, and that of a dog but ten. It therefore follows, that if both should equally degenerate, the alteration would be eight times more remarkable in the dog than man.

The two most necessary questions which result from the foregoing premises, are—whether hounds entered at hare are perfectly steady, afterwards, to fox;—and whether steadiness is not attainable by more reasonable means.—Having never hunted with gentlemen who follow this practice, I must leave the first question for others to determine; but having always had my hounds steady, I can myself answer the second.

The objections I have now made to the treatment of young hounds, by some huntsmen, though addressed, my friend, to you; are general objections, and should not personally offend you. I

know

know no man more just, or more humane, than you are. The disapprobation you so strongly marked in your last letter, of the severity used in some kennels, the noble animal we both of us admire, is much beholden to you for. Your intention of being present yourself, the first time a hound is flogged, to see how your new whipper-in behaves himself, is a proof of benevolence, which the Italian author of the most humane book, could not fail to commend you for. Huntsmen and whippers-in are seldom so unlucky as to have your feelings; yet custom, which authorises them to flog hounds unmercifully, does not do away the barbarity of it.——A gentleman seeing a girl skinning eels alive, asked her, "if it was not very cruel"—"O not at all, sir," replied the girl, "*they be used to it.*"

LETTER VIII.

You desire to know, if there is any remedy for the distemper among the dogs. I shall therefore mention all the disorders which my hounds have experienced, and point out the remedies which have been of service to them. The distemper you enquire about is, I believe, the most fatal, (the plague only excepted) that any animal is subject to. It has not been long known in this country, but it is almost inconceivable what numbers it has destroyed in so short a period ;—several hundreds, I can myself place to this mortifying account. It seems happily to be now on the decline ; at least, it is less frequent, and more mild ; and, I think, it is probable, that in time, it may be entirely removed. The effects of it are too generally known to need any description of them here ;—I wish the remedies were known as well !

A brother sportsman communicated to me a remedy, which, he said, his hounds had found great

great benefit from, viz. *An ounce of Peruvian bark, in a glass of Port wine, taken twice a day.* It is not infallible; but in some stages of this disorder, is certainly of use. The hound most infected, that ever I knew to recover, was a large stag-hound; he lay five days without being able to get off the bench; nor did he receive any nourishment during the whole time, but the medicine, with which, he drank three bottles of Port wine. ——You may think, perhaps, the feeder drank his share;—it is probable he might, if it had not been sent ready mixed up with the bark.—I once tried the *poudre unique*, thinking it a proper medicine for a disorder which is said to be putrid; but I cannot say any thing in its favour, with regard to dogs, at least.—Norris's drops I have also given, and with success. I gave a large spoonful of them in an equal quantity of Port wine, three times a day; as the dog grew better, I lessened the quantity.—When dogs run much at the nose, nothing will contribute more to the cure of them, than keeping that part clean; when that cannot conveniently be done, emetics will be necessary; the best I know, is a large spoonful of common salt, dissolved in three spoonfuls of warm water.—The first symptom of this disorder, generally, is a cough.—As soon as it is perceived

 amongst

amongst my young hounds, great attention is paid to them. They have plenty of clean straw, and are fed oftener and better than at other times; as long as they continue to eat the kennel meat, they are kept together; as soon as any of them refuse to feed, they are removed into another kennel, the door of the kennel is left open in the day, and they are only shut up at night; and, I think, being out in the air, is of great service to them. To such as are very bad, I give Norris's drops; to others emetics; whilst some, only require to be better fed than ordinary, and need no other remedy. They should be fed from the kitchen, when they refuse the kennel meat. Sometimes they will lose the use of their hinder parts; —bleeding them, by cutting off the last joint of the tail, may, perhaps, be of service to them. I cannot speak of it with any certainty, yet I have reason to think, that I once saved a favourite dog by this operation. In short, by one method or another, I think they may always be recovered.

The likeliest preservative for those that are well, is the keeping of them warm at night, and high fed. This disorder being probably infectious, it is better to provide an hospital for such

as are seized with it, which should be in the back part of the kennel.—There is no doubt but some kennels are healthier than others, and consequently less liable to it. I apprehend mine to be one of those; for in a dozen years, I do not believe I have lost half that number of old hounds, notwithstanding the great number of whelps I lose at their walks. Neighbouring kennels have not been equally fortunate; I have observed in some of them a disorder unknown in mine: I mean a swelling in the side, which sometimes breaks, but soon after forms again, and generally proves fatal at last.——I think, I heard a friend of mine say, whose kennel is subject to this complaint, that he never knew but one instance of a dog who recovered from it. I have, however, since known another, in a dog I had from him, which I cured by frequently rubbing with a digestive ointment: the tumour broke, and formed again several times, till at last it went entirely away. The disorder we have now been treating of, has this, I think, in common with the putrid sore throat, that it usually attacks the weakest. Women are more apt to catch the sore throat than men; children, than women; and young hounds more readily catch this disorder, than old.—When it seizes whelps at their walks, or young hounds, when first taken from them, it is then most dangerous. I also

 think

think that madness, *their* inflammatory fever, is less frequent than it was, before this disorder was known.

There are few disorders which dogs are so subject to as the mange. Air and exercise, wholesome food, and cleanliness, are the best preservatives against it. Your feeder should be particularly attentive to it, and when he perceives any spot upon them, let him rub it with the following mixture:

A pint of train oil,
Half a pint of oil of turpentine,
A quarter of a pound of ginger, in powder,
Half an ounce of gunpowder, finely powdered,
Mixed up cold.

If the disorder should be bad enough to resist *that,* three mild purging balls, one every other day, should be given, and the dog laid up for a little while afterwards.—For the red mange, you may use the following:

Four ounces of quicksilver,
Two ounces of Venice turpentine,
One pound of hog's lard.

The quicksilver and turpentine are to be rubbed together, till the globules all disappear. When

you

you apply it, you must rub an ounce, once a day, upon the part affected, for three days successively. This is to be used when the hair comes off, or any redness appears. How wonderful is the fatigue which a fox-hound undergoes! Could you count the miles he runs, the number would appear almost incredible. This he undergoes cheerfully; and, perhaps, three times a week, through a long season. His health, therefore, well deserves your care; nor should you suffer the least taint to injure it. Huntsmen are frequently too negligent in this point. I know one in particular, a famous one, too, whose kennel was never free from the mange, and the smell of brimstone was oftentimes stronger, I believe, in the noses of his hounds, than the scent of the fox.——If you chuse to try a curious prescription for the cure of the mange, in the Phil. Trans. No. 25, p. 451, you will find the following:

"Mr. Coxe procured an old mongrel cur, all "over mangey, of a middle size, and having some "hours before fed him plentifully with cheese-"parings and milk, he prepared his jugular "vein; then he made a strong ligature on his "neck, that the venal blood might be emitted "with the greater impetus; after this, he took a young

"young land spaniel, about the same bigness, "and prepared his jugular vein likewise, that the "descendant part might receive the mangey "dog's blood, and the ascendant, discharge his "own into a dish; he transfused about four- "teen or sixteen ounces of the blood of the *in-* "*fected*, into the veins of the *sound* dog; by this "experiment there appeared no alteration in the "sound one, but the mangey dog was in about "ten days, or a fortnight's time perfectly cured; "and possibly this is the quickest and surest "remedy for that disease, either in man or "beast."

Hounds sometimes are bitten by vipers:—sweet oil has been long esteemed as a certain antidote; some should be applied to the part, and some taken inwardly. Though a friend of mine informs me, that the common cheese rennet, externally applied, is a more efficacious remedy than oil, for the bite of a viper. They are liable to wounds and cuts—Friar's balsam is very good, if applied immediately; yet, as it is apt to shut up a bad wound too soon, the following tincture, in such cases, may perhaps be preferable; at least, after the first dressing or two—

Of

Of Barbadoes aloes, two ounces,
Of myrrh, pounded, three ounces,
Mixed up with a quart of brandy.

The bottle should be well corked, and put into a bark bed, or dunghill, for about ten days or a fortnight.—The tongue of the dog, in most cases, is his best surgeon; where he can apply *that*, he seldom needs any other remedy.—A green, or seton, in the neck, is of great relief in most disorders of the eyes; and I have frequently known dogs almost blind, recovered by it.—It is also of service when dogs are shaken in the shoulders, and has made many sound. In the latter case there should be two, one applied on each side, and as near the shoulder as possible.——The following ointment may be used to disperse swellings.

Of fresh mutton suet, *tried*, two pounds,
Of gum elemi, one pound,
Of common turpentine, ten ounces.

The gum is to be melted with the suet, and, when taken from the fire, the turpentine is to be mixed with it, straining the mixture whilst it is hot.—Dogs, frequently, are stubbed in the foot. The tincture before-mentioned, and this, or any digestive ointment, will soon recover them.—The following

following excellent remedy for a strain, with which I have cured myself, and many others, I have also found of benefit to dogs, when strained in the leg or foot.

Dissolve two ounces of camphire in half a pint of spirits of wine, and put to it a large bullock's gall. The part affected must be rubbed before the fire, three or four times a day.

Sore feet are cured with brine, or salt and vinegar, a handful of salt to a pint of vinegar. ——A plaister of black pitch is the best cure for a thorn in either man, horse, or dog; and I have known it succeed, after every thing else had failed.——If the part is much inflamed, a common poultice bound over the plaister, will assist in the cure.

If hounds are much troubled with worms, the best cure I know, is the following:

Of pewter pulverized, 1 drachm 7 grs.
Of Æthiop's mineral, 16 grs.

This is to be given three times, once every other day, and the dog should be kept warm, and from cold water. Whey, or pot liquor, may be given

given him two or three hours after, and should be continued, instead of meat, during the time he is taking the medicine. The best way of giving it, is to mix it up with butter, and then to make it into balls, with a little flour.

When a dog is rough in his coat, and scratches much, two or three purging balls, and a little rest afterwards, seldom fail to get him into order again. To make dogs fine in their coats, you should use the following dressing:

One pound of native sulphur,
One quart of train oil,
One pound of oil of turpentine
Half a pound of soap.

My hounds are dressed with it two or three times only in a year; in some kennels, I am told, they dress them once in two months. The more frequently it is done, the cleaner, I suppose, your hounds will look.——Should you choose to dress your puppies, before they are put out to their walks, the following receipt, which I received from a friend of mine in Staffordshire (the person already mentioned in this letter, an excellent sportsman, to whom I have many obligations) will answer the purpose best, and on their change of diet, from milk, to meat, may be sometimes necessary:

Three

Three quarters of an ounce of quicksilver,
Half a pint of spirits of turpentine,
Four ounces of hog's lard,
One pound of soft soap,
Three ounces of common turpentine, in which the quicksilver must be killed.

Instinct directs dogs, when the stomach is out of order, to be their own physician; and it is to them we owe our knowledge how to relieve it. It may appear foreign to our present purpose; yet as it is much (if true) to the honour of animals in general, I must beg leave to add, what a French author tells us:—that also by the hippopotamus, we are instructed how to bleed, and by the crane, how to give a clyster.

Madness, thou dreadful malady; what shall I say to thee! or what preservative shall I find against thy envenomed fang! Somervile, who declines writing of lesser ills, is not silent on the subject of this.

> "Of lesser ills the muse declines to sing,
> Nor stoops so low; of these each groom can tell
> The proper remedy."

I wish this worthy gentleman, to whom we have already been so much obliged, had been less sparing

sparing of his instructions; since it is possible grooms may have all the knowledge he supposes them to have, and their masters may stand in need of it. No man, I believe, will complain of being too well informed; nor is any knowledge unnecessary which is unlikely to be put in practice;—the executive part is full sufficient to trust in a groom's hands. The advice Somervile gives on the subject of madness, is worth your notice:

> "When Sirius reigns, and the sun's parching beams
> Bake the dry gaping surface, visit thou
> Each ev'n and morn, with quick observant eye,
> Thy panting pack. If in dark sullen mood,
> The glouting hound refuse his wonted meal,
> Retiring to some close, obscure retreat,
> Gloomy, disconsolate; with speed remove
> The poor infectious wretch, and in strong chains
> Bind him suspected. Thus that dire disease
> Which art can't cure, wise caution may prevent."

Plenty of water, whey, greens, physic, air, and exercise, such as I have before mentioned, have hitherto preserved my kennel from its baneful influence; and I make no doubt you will also find their good effects. If, notwithstanding, you should at any time have reason to suspect the approach of this evil, let your hounds be well observed at the time when they feed; there can be no danger whilst they will eat. Should a whole

pack be in the same predicament, they must be chained up separate; and I should be very cautious what experiment I tried to cure them; for I have been told by those who have had madness in their kennels, and who have drenched their hounds to cure it, that it was the occasion of its breaking out a long time afterwards, and that it continued to do so, as long as they gave them any thing to put it off.—If a few dogs only have been bitten, you had better hang them.—If you suspect any, you had better separate them from the rest; and a short time, if you use no remedy, will determine whether they are really bitten, or not.—Should you, however, be desirous of trying a remedy, the following prescription, I am told, is a very good one.

Of Turbith's mineral eight grains,
Ditto sixteen grains,
Ditto thirty-two grains.

This is to be given for three mornings successively; beginning the first day with eight grains, and increasing it according to the above direction. The dog should be empty when he takes it, and should have been bled the day before. The dose should be given early in the morning, and the dog may have some thin broth, or pot liquor, about two or three o'clock, but nothing else during the time

time he takes the medicine; he should also be kept from water. The best way to give it is in butter, and made up into balls, with a little flour. Care must be taken that he does not throw it up again. After the last day of the medicine, he may be fed as usual. Various are the drenches and medicines which are given for this disorder, and all said to be infallible: this last, however, I prefer. The whole pack belonging to a gentleman in my neighbourhood was bitten; and he assures me, he never knew an instance of a dog who went mad, that had taken this medicine.—The caution I have recommended to you, I flatter myself will preserve you from this dreadful malady, for which I know not how to recommend a remedy. Several years ago I had a game-keeper much bitten in the fleshy part of his thigh; a horse, that was bitten at the same time, died raving mad; the man was cured by Sir George Cob's medicine.—I have heard the Ormskirk medicine is also very good. I have given it to several persons in my neighbourhood, and, I believe, with success; at least, I have not, as yet, heard any thing to the contrary.—Though I mention these as the two most favourite remedies, I recommend neither. Somervile's advice, which I have already given, is what I recommend to you—if properly attended to, it will prevent the want of any remedy.

P. S. A Treatise on Canine Madness, written by Dr. James, is well worth your reading. You will find, that he prescribes the same remedy for the cure of madness in dogs, as I have mentioned here, but in different quantities. I have however taken the liberty of recommending the quantities above-mentioned, as they have been known to succeed in my neighbourhood, and as the efficacy of them has been very frequently proved.

LET-

LETTER IX.

THE variety of questions which you are pleased to ask concerning the huntsman, will be better answered, I think, when we are on the subject of hunting. In the mean time, I will endeavour to describe what a good huntsman should be. He should be young, strong, and active, bold and enterprising; fond of the diversion, and indefatigable in the pursuit of it; he should be sensible and good tempered; he ought also to be sober; he should be exact, civil, and cleanly; he should be a good horseman, and a good groom; his voice should be strong and clear, and he should have an eye so quick, as to perceive which of his hounds carries the scent, when all are running; and should have so excellent an ear, as always to distinguish the foremost hounds, when he does not see them. He should be quiet, patient, and without conceit. Such are the excellencies which constitute a good huntsman: He should not, however,

ever, be too fond of displaying them, till necessity calls them forth.—He should let his hounds alone, whilst they *can hunt,* and he should have genius to assist them, *when they cannot.*

With regard to the whipper-in, as you keep two of them, (and no pack of fox-hounds is complete without) the first may be considered as a second huntsman, and should have nearly the same good qualities. It is necessary besides, that he should be attentive and obedient to the huntsman; and as his horse will probably have most to do, the lighter he is, the better; but if he is a good horseman, it will sufficiently overballance such an objection.—He must not be conceited.——I had one formerly, who, instead of stopping hounds as he ought, would try to kill a fox by himself.——This fault is unpardonable;—he should always maintain to the huntsman's halloo, and stop such hounds as divide from it,—When stopped, he should get forward with them after the huntsman.

He must always be contented to act an under part, except when circumstances may require that he should act otherwise; and the moment they cease, he must not fail to resume his former station.—You have heard me say, that where there

is

is much riot, I prefer an excellent whipper-in to an excellent huntsman.—The opinion, I believe, is new;—I must therefore endeavour to explain it.—My meaning is this: that I think I should have better sport, and kill more foxes with a moderate huntsman, and an excellent whipper-in, than with the best of huntsmen, without such an assistant. You will say, perhaps, that a good huntsman will make a good whipper-in;—not such a one as I mean;—his talent must be born with him. My reasons are, that good hounds, (and I would not keep bad ones) stand oftener in need of the one, than the other; and genius, which in a whipper-in, if attended by obedience, his first requisite, can do no hurt; in a huntsman, is a dangerous, though desirable quality; and if not accompanied with a large share of prudence, and I may say humility, will often spoil your sport, and hurt your hounds. A gentleman told me, he heard the famous Will Dean, when his hounds were running hard in a line with Daventry, from whence they were at that time many miles distant, swear exceedingly at the whipper-in, saying, "*What business have you here?*" the man was amazed at the question, "*why don't you* "*know,*" said he, "*and be d—d to you, that the* "*great earth at Daventry is open?*"—The man got forward, and reached the earth just time

 enough

enough to see the fox go in.—If therefore whippers-in are at liberty to act as they shall think right, they are much less confined, than the huntsman himself, who must follow his hounds; and consequently they have greater scope to exert their genius, if they have any.

I had a dispute with an old sportsman of my acquaintance, who contended, that the whipper-in should always attend the huntsman, to obey his orders; (a stable-boy, in that case, would make as good a whipper-in, as the best:) but this is so far from being the case, that he should be always on the opposite side of the cover from him, or I am much mistaken in my opinion: if within hearing of his halloo, he is near enough; for that is the hunting signal he is to obey.—The station of the second whipper-in may be near the huntsman, for which reason any boy that can halloo, and make a whip smack, may answer the purpose.

Your first whipper-in being able to hunt the hounds occasionally, will answer another good purpose;—it will keep your huntsman in order.—They are very apt to be impertinent, when they think you cannot do without them.

At going from the kennel, the place of the first whipper-in is before the hounds; that of the second whipper-in should be some distance behind them; if not, I fear they will not be suffered even to empty themselves, let their wants be ever so great; for as soon as a boy is made a whipper-in, he fancies, he is to whip the hounds whenever he can get at them, whether they deserve it, or not.

I have always thought a huntsman a happy man: his office is pleasing, and at the same time flattering; we pay him for that which diverts him, and he is enriched by his greatest pleasure; nor is a General, after a victory, more proud, than is a huntsman who returns with his fox's head.

I have heard that a certain Duke, who allowed no vails to his servants, asked his huntsman, what he generally made of his field-money, and gave him what he asked, instead of it: This went on very well for some time, till at last the huntsman desired an audience.—"Your Grace," said he, "is very generous, and gives me more than "ever I got from field-money in my life; yet I "come to beg a favour of your Grace:—That

you

" you would let me take field-money again; for " I have not half the pleasure now in killing a " fox, that I had before.

As you ask my opinion of scent, I think I had better give it you before we begin on the subject of hunting. I must, at the same time, take the liberty of telling you, that you have puzzled me exceedingly; for scent is, I believe, what we sportsmen know least about; and, to use the words of a great classic writer;

Hoc sum contentus, quòd etiam si quo quidque fiat ignorem, quid fiat intelligo.—Cic. de div.

Somervile, who, as I have before observed, is the only one I know of, who has thrown any light on the subject of hunting, says, I think, but little about scent; I send you his words; I shall afterwards add a few of my own.

" Should some more curious sportsmen here inquire,
Whence this sagacity, this wond'rous power
Of tracing step by step, or man, or brute?
What guide invincible points out their way,
O'er the dark marsh, bleak hill, and sandy plain?
The courteous muse shall the dark cause reveal.
The blood that from the heart incessant rolls
In many a crimson tide, then here, and there

In

In smaller rills disparted, as it flows
Propell'd, the serous particles evade,
Thro' th' open pores, and with the ambient air
Entangling mix, as fuming vapours rise,
And hang upon the gently purling brook,
There by the incumbent atmosphere compress'd
The panting chace grows warmer as he flies,
And thro' the net-work of the skin perspires;
Leaves a long---steaming---trail behind; which by
The cooler air condens'd remains, unless
By some rude storm dispers'd, or rarify'd
By the meridian sun's intenser heat,
To every shrub the warm effluvia cling,
Hang on the grass, impregnate earth and skies
With nostrils opening wide, o'er hill, o'er dale,
The vig'rous hounds pursue, with ev'ry breath
Inhale the grateful steam, quick pleasures sting
Their tingling nerves, while they their thanks repay,
And in triumphant melody confess
The titillating joy. Thus on the air
Depends the hunter's hopes."

I cannot agree with Mr. Somervile, in thinking scent depends on the air only. It depends also on the soil. Without doubt, the best scent is that, which is occasioned by the effluvia, as he calls it, or particles of scent, which are constantly perspiring from the game, as it runs, and are strongest and most favourable to the hound, when kept, by the gravity of the air, to the height of his breast; for then, it neither is above his reach, nor is it necessary he should stoop for it. At such times, scent is said to lie *breast high*. Experience

perience tells us, that difference of soil, occasions difference of scent; and on the richness of soil and the moderate moisture of it, does scent also depend, I think, as well as on the air. At the time leaves begin to fall, and before they are rotted, we know that the scent lies ill in cover. This alone would be a sufficient proof, that scent does not depend on the air only. A difference of scent is also occasioned by difference of motion; the faster the game goes, the less scent it leaves. When game has been ridden after, and hurried on by imprudent sportsmen, or has been courted by sheep dogs, the scent is less favorable to hounds; one reason of which may be, that the particles of scent are then more dissipated.

I believe it is very difficult to ascertain what scent exactly is; I have known it alter very often in the same day; I believe, however, it depends chiefly on two things, "*the condition the ground* "*is in, and the temperature of the air*;" both of which, I apprehend, should be moist, without being wet: when both are in this condition, the scent is then perfect; and vice versâ, when the ground is hard, aud the air dry, there seldom will be any scent.—It scarce ever lies with a north, or an east wind; a southerly wind without rain, and a westerly wind that is not too rough, are the

 most

most favourable.—Storms in the air are great enemies to scent, and seldom fail to take it entirely away.—A fine sun-shiny day, is not often a good hunting day; but what the French call, *jour des dames*, warm without sun, is generally a perfect one: there are not many such in a whole season.—In some fogs, I have known the scent lie high; in others, not at all; depending, I believe, the quarter the wind is then in.—I have known it lie very high in a mist, when not too wet; but if the wet hangs much on the boughs and bushes, it falls on the scent, and deadens it. When the dogs roll, the scent, I have frequently observed seldom lies; for what reason, I know not; but, with permission, if they smell strong, when they first come out of the kennel, the proverb is in their favour; and that smell is a prognostic of good luck.—When the cobwebs hang to the bushes, there is seldom much scent.—During a white frost the scent lies high; as it also does when the frost is quite gone: there is a time, just as it is going off, when it never lies: it is a critical minute for hounds, in which their game is frequently lost. In a great dew the scent is the same. In heathy countries, where the game brushes as it goes along, scent seldom fails. Where the ground carries, the scent is bad for a very

very evident reason, which hare-hunters, who pursue their game over greasy fallows, and through dirty roads, have great cause to complain of.——A wet night frequently produces good chaces; as then, the game never like to run the cover, or the roads.—It has been often remarked, that scent lies best in the richest soils; and countries which are favourable to horses, are seldom so to hounds. I have also observed, that in some particular places, scent never lies.

Never take out your hounds on a very windy, or bad day.

> " These inauspicious days, on other cares
> Employ thy precious hours; th' improving friend
> With open arms embrace, and from his lips
> Glean science, season'd with good-natur'd wit;
> But if th' inclement skies, and angry Jove,
> Forbid the pleasing intercourse, thy books
> Invite thy ready hand, each sacred page
> Rich with the wise remarks of heroes old,"

The sentiments of Mr. Somervile always do him honour, but on no occasion, more than on this.

In reading over my letter, I find I have used the word *smell*, in a sense that perhaps you will criticize.——A gentleman, who, I suppose, was

 not

not the sweetest in the world, sitting in the front boxes at the playhouse, on a crowded night, his neighbour very familiarly told him, he *smelt strong*: "No, Sir," replied he, with infinite good humour,—it is you that *smell*—I *stink*.

Of hare-hunting.

LETTER X.

I THOUGHT I had been writing all this time to a fox-hunter; and hitherto my letters have had no other object. I now receive a letter from you, full of questions about hare-hunting; to all of which you expect an answer. I must tell you, at the same time, that though I kept harriers many years, it was not my intention, if you had not asked it, to have written on the subject. By inclination, I was never a hare-hunter; I followed this diversion more for air, and exercise, than for amusement; and if I could have persuaded myself to ride on the turnpike road to the three-mile stone, and back again, I should have thought I had no need of a pack of harriers.—Excuse me, brother hare-hunters! I mean not to offend; I speak only of the country where I live. The hare-hunting there is so bad, that, did you know it, your wonder would be, how I could have persevered in it so long, not that I should forsake it now. I respect hunting in whatever shape it appears;

appears; it is a manly, and a wholesome exercise, and seems, by nature, designed to be the amusement of a Briton.

You ask, how many hounds a pack of harriers should consist of? and what kind of hound is best suited to that diversion?——You should never, I think, exceed twenty couple in the field; it might be difficult to get a greater number to run well together, and a pack of harriers cannot be complete if they do not: besides, the fewer hounds you have, the less you foil the ground, which you otherwise would find a great hindrance to your hunting.—Your other question is not easily answered; the hounds, I think, most likely to shew you sport, are between the large slow hunting harrier, and the little fox beagle; one is too dull, too heavy, and too slow; the other, too lively, too light, and too fleet. The first, it is true, have most excellent noses, and I make no doubt will kill their game at last, if the day be long enough; but, you know, they are short in winter, and it is bad hunting in the dark. —The others, on the contrary, fling and dash, and are all alive; but every cold blast affects them; and if your country is deep and wet, it is not impossible but some of them may be drowned.

drowned. My hounds were a cross of both these kinds, in which it was my endeavour to get as much bone and strength, in as small a compass as possibe.——It was a difficult undertaking.—I bred many years, and an infinity of hounds, before I could get what I wanted: I, at last, had the pleasure to see them very handsome, small, yet very bony; they ran remarkably well together, ran fast enough; had all the alacrity you could desire, and would hunt the coldest scent.—When they were thus perfect, I did, as many others do —I parted with them.

It may be necessary to unsay, now I am turned hare-hunter again, many things I have been saying, as a fox-hunter, as I hardly know any two things, of the same genus, (if I may be allowed the expression) that differ so entirely. What I said in a former letter, about the huntsman and whipper-in, are among the number: as to the huntsman, I think, he should not be young: I should most certainly prefer one, as the French call it, *d'un certain age*, as he is to be quiet and patient; for patience, he should be a very Grizzle; and the more quiet he is, the better. He should have infinite perseverance; for a hare should never be given up, whilst it is possible to hunt her; she is sure to stop, and therefore may always be

be recovered. Were it usual to attend to the breed of our huntsmen, as well as to that of our hounds, I know no family that would furnish a better cross than that of the *silent gentleman*, the spectator mentions: a female of his line, crossed with a knowing huntsman, would probably produce a perfect hare-hunter.

The whipper-in also has little to do with the one, I before described: yet he may be like the second whipper-in to a pack of fox-hounds; the stable-boy who is to follow the huntsman; but I would have him still more confined, for he should not dare even to stop a hound, or smack a whip, without the huntsman's order. Much noise and rattle is directly contrary to the first principles of hare-hunting, which is to be perfectly quiet, and to let your hounds alone. I have seen few hounds so good as town packs, that have no professed huntsman to follow them. If they have no one to help them, they have at the same time no one to spoil them; which, I believe, for this kind of hunting, is still more material. I should, however, mention a fault I have observed, and which such hounds must of necessity sometimes be guilty of, that is, *running back the heel.* Hounds are naturally fond of scent; if they cannot carry it forward, they will turn, and hunt it back again: hounds

 that

that are left to themselves, make a fault of this, and it is, I think, the only one they commonly have.—Though it is certainly best to let your hounds alone, and thereby to give as much scope to their natural instinct, as you can; yet in this particular instance, you should check it mildly; for, as it is almost an invariable rule in all hunting, to make the head good, you should encourage them to try forward first; which may be done without taking them off their noses, or without the least prejudice to their hunting. If trying forward should not succeed, they may then be suffered to try back again, which you will find them all ready enough to do; for they are sensible how far they brought the scent, and where they left it. The love of scent is natural to them, and they have infinitely more sagacity in it, than we ought to pretend to.—I have no doubt, but they often think us very obstinate, and very foolish.

Harriers, to be good, like all other hounds, must be kept to their own game. If you run fox with them, you spoil them. Hounds cannot be perfect, unless used to one scent, and one stile of hunting. Harriers run fox in so different a stile from hare, that it is of great disservice to them, when they return to hare again. It makes them

them wild, and teaches them to skirt.—The high scent which a fox leaves, the straitness of his running, the eagerness of the pursuit, and the noise that generally accompanies it, all contribute to spoil a harrier.

I hope, you agree with me, that it is fault in a pack of harriers to go too fast; for a hare is a little timorous animal, that we cannot help feeling some compassion for, at the very time when we are pursuing her destruction: we should give scope to all her little tricks, nor kill her foully, and over-matched. Instinct instructs her to make a good defence, when not unfairly treated; and I will venture to say, that, as far as her own safety is concerned, she has more cunning than the fox, and makes many shifts to save her life, far beyond all his artifice Without doubt, you have often heard of hares, who, from the miraculous escapes they have made, have been thought *witches*; but, I believe, you never heard of a fox that had cunning enough to be thought a *wizzard.*

They, who like to rise early, have amusement in seeing the hare trailed to her form; it is of great service to hounds; it also shews their goodness to the huntsman, more than any other hunt-

 ing,

ing, as it discovers to him those who have the most tender noses. But, I confess, I seldom thought it worth while to leave my bed a moment sooner on that account. I always thought hare-hunting should be taken as a ride after breakfast, to get us an appetite to our dinner. If you make a serious business of it, I think you spoil it.—Hare-finders, in this case, are necessary: it is agreeable to know where to go immediately for your diversion, and not beat about for hours perhaps, before you find. It is more material, I think, with regard to the second hare than the first: for if you are warmed with your gallop, the waiting long in the cold afterwards, is, I believe, as unwholesome, as it is disagreeable. Whoever does not mind this, had better let his hounds find their own game; they will certainly hunt it with more spirit afterwards, and he will have a pleasure himself in expectation, which no certainty can ever give. Hare-finders make hounds idle; they also make them wild. Mine knew the men, as well as I did myself; could see them almost as far; and would run, full cry, to meet them. Hare-finders are of one great use; they hinder your hounds from chopping hares, which they otherwise could not fail to do. I had in my pack one hound in particular, that was famous for it; he would challenge on a trail very late at noon, and

and had as good a knack at chopping a hare afterwards; he was one that liked to go the shortest way to work, nor did he choose to take more trouble than was necessary.—Is it not wonderful that the trail of a hare should lie after so many hours, when the scent of her dies away so soon?

Hares are said, (I know not with what truth) to foresee a change of weather, and to seat themselves accordingly. This is however certain, that they are seldom found in places much exposed to the wind. In inclosures, I think, they more frequently are found near to a hedge, than in the middle of a field. They; who make a profession of hare-finding, (and a very advantageous one it is, (in some countries) are directed by the wind where to look for their game. With good eyes and nice observation, they are enabled to find them, in any weather. You may make forms, and hares will sit in them. I have heard it is a common practice with shepherds on the Wiltshire downs; and by making them on the side of hills, they can tell at a distance off, whether there are hares in them, or not. Without doubt, people frequently do not find hares, from not knowing them in their forms. A gentleman, coursing with his friends, was shewn a hare that was foun

sitting—"*Is that a hare?*" he cried—"*then, by Jove, I found two this morning, as we rode along.*"

Though the talent of hare-finding is certainly of use, and the money collected for it, when given to shepherds, is money well bestowed by a sportsman, as it tends to the preservation of his game; yet, I think, when it is indiscriminately given, hare-finders often are too well paid. I have known them frequently get more than a guinea for a single hare. I myself have paid five shillings in a morning, for hares found sitting. To make our companions pay dearly for their diversion, and oftentimes so much more than it is worth. To take from the pockets of men who oftentimes can ill afford it, as much as would pay for a good dinner afterwards, is, in my opinion, a very ungenerous custom; and this consideration induced me to collect but once, with my own hounds, for the hare-finders. The money was afterwards divided amongst them, and if they had less than half a crown each, I myself supplied the deficiency.——An old miser, who had paid his shilling, complained bitterly of it afterwards, and said, "*he had been made to pay a shilling for two-penny-worth of sport.*"

When

A particular mode of hare-hunting.

When the game is found, you cannot be too quiet: The hare is an animal so very timorous, that she is frequently headed back, and your dogs are liable to overrun the scent, at every instant: It is best, therefore, to keep a considerable way behind them, that they may have room to turn, as soon as they perceive they have lost the scent; and, if treated in this manner, they will seldom over-run it much. Your hounds, through the whole chace, should be left almost entirely to themselves, nor should they be hallooed too much: when the hare doubles, they should hunt through those doubles; nor is a hare hunted fairly, when hunted otherwise.——They should follow her every step she takes, as well over greasy fallows, as through large flocks of sheep; nor should they ever be cast, but when nothing can be done without it. I know a gentleman, a pleasant sportsman, but a very irregular hare-hunter, who does not exactly follow the method here laid down; as his method is very extraordinary, I will relate it to you. His hounds are large and fleet; they have at times hunted every thing; red deer, fallow deer, fox, and hare; and must in their nature have been most excellent; since, notwithstanding tbe variety of their game, they are still good. When a hare is found sitting, he seldom fails to give his hounds a view; and as they

all halloo, and make what noise they can, she is half frightened to death immediately. This done, he then sends his whipper-in, to ride after her, with particular directions not to let her get out of his sight; and he has found out, that this is the only proper use of a whipper-in.—If they come to a piece of fallow, or a flock of sheep, the hounds are not suffered to hnnt any longer, but are capped and hallooed as near to the hare as possible; by this time the poor devil is near her end, which the next view generally finishes; the strongest hare, in this manner, seldom standing twenty minutes; but my friend says, a hare is good eating, and he therefore thinks he cannot kill too many of them. By what Martial says, I suppose he was of the same opinion.—

"Inter quadrupedes gloria prima lepus."

A propos to the eating of them.—I must tell you, that in the Encyclopedie, a book of universal knowledge, where, of course, I expected to find something on hunting, which might be of service to you, as a sportsman, to know, I found the following advice, about the dressing of a hare, which may be of use to your cook; and the regard I have for your health will not suffer me to conceal it from you.—"*On mange le levraut roti* " *dans*

"dans quelques provinces du royaume, en Gas-" "cogne et en Languedoc, par exemple, avec une" "sauce composée de vinaigre et de sucre, qui est" "mauvaise, malsaine en soi essentiel lements," "mais qui est surtout abominable pour tous ceux" "qui n'y sont pas accoutumés." You, without doubt, therefore, will think yourself obliged to the authors of the Encyclopedie for their kind and friendly information.

Having heard of a small pack of beagles to be disposed of in Derbyshire, I sent my coachman, the person whom I could at that time best spare, to fetch them. It was a long journey, and not having been used to hounds, he had some trouble in getting them along; also, as ill luck would have it, they had not been out of the kennel for many weeks before, and were so riotous, that they run after every thing they saw; sheep, cur-dogs, and birds of all sorts, as well as hares and deer, I found had been his amusement, all the way along: however, he lost but one of the hounds by the way; and when I asked him what he thought of them, he said—"they could not fail of "being good hounds, for they would hunt, *any* "*thing.*"

In your answer to my last letter, you ask, of what

what service it can be to a huntsman to be a good groom, and whether I think he will hunt hounds the better for it.—I wonder you did not rather ask why he should be *cleanly?*—I should be more at a loss how to answer you. My huntsman has always the care of his own horses; I never yet knew one, who did not think himself capable of it; it is for that reason I wish him to be a *good groom.*

You say, you cannot see how a huntsman of genius can spoil your sport, or hurt your hounds?—I will tell you how:—by too much foul play he frequently will catch a fox before he is half tired;—and by lifting his hounds too much, he will teach them to shuffle.——An improper use of the one, may spoil your sport; too frequent use of the other must hurt your hounds.

The subject of hare-hunting resumed.

LETTER XI.

I HAVE already observed, that a trail in the morning is of great service to hounds, and that to be perfect they should always find their own game; for the method of hare-finding, though more convenient, will occasion some vices in them, which it will be impossible to correct.

Mr. Somervile's authority strengthens my observation, that when a hare is found, all should be quiet; nor should you ride near your hounds, till they are well settled to the scent.

> "————————Let all be hush'd,
> No clamour loud, no frantic joy be heard;
> Lest the wild hound run gadding o'er the plain
> Untractable, nor hear thy chiding voice."

The natural eagerness of the hounds will, at such a time as this, frequently carry even the best of them, wide of the scent, which too much encouragement, or pressing too close upon them, may continue beyond all possibility of recovery; this

this should be always guarded against.—After a little while, you have less to fear.—You may may then approach them nearer, and encourage them more; leaving, however, at all times, sufficient room for them to turn, should they overrun the scent. On high roads, and dry paths, be always doubtful of the scent, nor give them much encouragement; but when a hit is made on either side, you may halloo as much as you please, nor can you then encourage your hounds too much. A hare generally describes a circle as she runs; larger or less, according to her strength, and the openness of the country. In inclosures, and where there is much cover, the circle is for the most part so small, that it is a constant puzzle to the hounds.——They have a Gordian knot, in that case, ever to unloose; and though it may afford matter of speculation to the philosopher, it is always contrary to the wishes of the sportsman.—Such was the country I hunted in for many years.

> "Huntsman! her gait observe: if in wide rings
> She wheel her mazy way, in the same round
> Persisting still, she'll foil the beaten track.
> But if she fly, and with the fav'ring wind
> Urge her bold course, less intricate thy task:
> Push on thy pack.
>
> SOMERV.

Besides running the foil, they frequently make doubles, which is going forward, to tread the same steps back again, on purpose to confuse their pursuers; and the same manner in which they make the first double, they generally continue, whether long or short. This information, therefore, if properly attended to by the huntsman, may also be of use to him in his casts.

When they make their double on a high road, or dry path, and then leave it with a spring, it is often the occasion of a long fault: the spring, which a hare makes on these occasions, is hardly to be credited, any more, than is her ingenuity in making it; both are wonderful!

> " ———————let cavillers deny
> That brutes have reason; sure 'tis something more:
> 'Tis heav'n directs, and stratagems inspire,
> Beyond the short extent of human thought."
>
> SOMERV.

She frequently, after running a path a considerable way, will make a double, and then stop till the hounds have past her; she will then steal away as secretly as she can, and return the same way she came. This is the greatest of all trials for hounds. It is so hot a foil, that in the best packs there are not many hounds that can hunt

it;

it; you must follow those hounds that can, and try to hit her off where she breaks her foil, which in all probability she will soon do, as she now flatters herself she is secure.—When the scent lies bad in cover, she will sometimes hunt the hounds.—

> "————— The covert's utmost bound
> Slily she skirts; behind them cautious creeps,
> And in that very track, so lately stain'd
> By all the steaming crowd, seems to pursue
> The foe she flies,——"
>
> Som.

When the hounds are at a check, make your huntsman stand still, nor suffer him to move his horse one way or the other: hounds lean naturally towards the scent, and if he does not say a word to them, will soon recover it. If you speak to a hound at such a time, calling him by his name, which is too much the practice, he seldom fails to look up in your face, as much as to say, *what the deuce do you want?*—when he stoops to the scent again, is it not probable he means to say, *you fool you, let me alone.*

When your hounds are at fault, let not a word be said: let such as follow them ignorantly and unworthily, stand all aloof.—*Procul, O procul este*

este profani! for whilst such are chattering, not a hound will hunt.——*A propos*, Sir, a politician will say,—What news from America?—*A propos*,--Do you think both the Admirals will be tried? —Or, *a propos*,—Did you hear what has happened to my grand mother?—Such questions are, at such a time, extremely troublesome, and very *mal-à propos*.——Amongst the antients, it was reckoned *an ill omen* to speak in hunting—I wish it were thought so now.—*Hoc age*, should be one of the first maxims in hunting, as in life; and I can assure you, when I am in the field, I never wish to hear any other tongue than that of a hound.—— A neighbour of mine was so truly a hare hunter in this particular, that he would not suffer any body to speak a word when his hounds were at fault:—A gentleman happened to cough, he rode up to him immediately, and said, "I "*wish, Sir, with all my heart, your cough was* "*better.*"

In a good day, good hounds seldom give up the scent at head; if they do, there is generally an obvious reason for it; this observation a huntsman should always make; it will direct his cast. If he is a good one, he will be attentive as he goes, not only to his hounds, nicely observing

which

which have the lead, and the degree of scent they carry, but also to the various circumstances that are continually happening from change of weather, and difference of ground. He will also be mindful of the distance which the hare keeps before the hounds, and of her former doubles, and he will remark what point she makes to. All these observations will be of use, should a long fault make his assistance necessary; and if the hare has headed back, he will carefully observe, whether she met any thing in her course to turn her, or turned of her own accord. When he casts his hounds, let him begin, by making a small circle; if that will not do, then let him try a larger; he afterwards may be at liberty to persevere in any cast he may judge most likely.——As a hare generally revisits her old haunts, and returns to the place where she was first found, if the scent is quite gone, and the hounds can no longer hunt, *that* is as likely a cast as any to recover her. ——Let him remember this in all his casts, that the hounds are not to follow his horses heels, nor are they to carry their heads high, and noses in the air.—At these times they must try for the scent, or they will never find it, and he is either to make his cast slow, or quick, as he perceives his hounds try, and as the scent is either good or bad.

Give

Give particular directions to your huntsman to prevent his hounds, as much as he can, from chopping hares. Huntsmen like to get blood at any rate; and when hounds are used to it, it would surprise you to see how attentive they are to find opportunities.——A hare must be very wild, or very nimble to escape them. I remember, in a furzy country, that my hounds chopped three hares in one morning; for it is the nature of those animals either to leap up before the hounds come near them, and *steal away*, as it is called; or else to lie close, till they put their very noses upon them. Hedges, also, are very dangerous; if the huntsman beats the hedge himself, which is the usual practice, the hounds are always upon the watch, and a hare must have good luck to escape them all. The best way to prevent it, is to have the hedge well beaten at some distance before the hounds.

Hares seldom run so well, as when they do not know where they are. They run well in a fog, and generally take a good country. If they set off down the wind, they seldom return; you then cannot push on your hounds too much. When the game is sinking, you will perceive your old hounds get forward; they then, will run at head.

 "Happy

"Happy the man, who with unrivall'd speed
Can pass his fellows, and with pleasure view
The struggling pack; how in the rapid course
Alternate they preside, and jostling push
To guide the dubious scent; how giddy youth
Oft babbling errs, by wiser age reprov'd;
How, niggard of his strength, the wise old hound
Hangs in the rear, 'till some important point
Rouse all his diligence, or till the chace
Sinking he finds; then to the head he springs,
With thirst of glory fir'd, and wins the prize."

SOMERVILE.

Keep no babblers; for though the rest of the pack soon find them out, and do not mind them, yet it is unpleasant to hear their noise; nor are such fit companions for the rest.

Though the Spectator makes us laugh at the oddity of his friend, Sir Roger, for returning a hound, which he said was an excellent *bass*, because he wanted a *counter-tenor*; yet I am of opinion, that if we attended more to the variety of the notes frequently to be met with in the tongues of hounds, it might greatly add to the harmony of the pack. I do not know that a complete concert could be obtained, but it would be easy to prevent discordant sounds.

Keep

A hint to such sportsmen who ride over their own hounds.

Keep no hound that runs false: the loss of one hare is more than such a dog is worth.

I think it is but reasonable to give your hounds a hare sometimes: I always gave mine the last they killed, if I thought they deserved her.

It is too much the custom, first, to ride over a dog, and then cry *ware horse.*—Take care not to ride over your hounds: I have known many a good dog spoiled by it: in open ground speak to them first; you may afterwards ride over them if you please; but in roads and paths they frequently cannot get out of your way; it surely then is your business, either to stop your horse, or break the way for them, and the not doing it, give me leave to say, is absurd and cruel; nor can that man be called a good sportsman, who thus wantonly destroys his own sport.—Indeed, good sportsmen seldom ride on the line of the tail hounds.

You ask how my warren hares are caught?—it shall be the subject of my next letter.

LETTER XII.

You wish to know, how my warren-hares are caught? they are caught in traps, not unlike the common rat-traps. I leave mine always at the muses, but they are *set* only, when hares are wanted: the hares, by thus constantly going through them, have no mistrust, and are easily caught. These traps should be made of old wood, and even then, it will be some time before they will venture through them. Other muses must be also left open, least a distaste should make them forsake the place. To my warren I have about twenty of these traps; though, as the stock of hares is great, I seldom have occasion to set more than five or six, and scarcely ever fail of catching as many hares. The warren is paled in, but I found it necessary, to make the muses of brick; that is, where the traps are placed. Should you at any time, wish to make a hare-warren, it will be necessary for you to see one first, and examine the traps, boxes, and stoppers, to all which,

 there

there are particularities, not easy to be described. Should you find the hares, towards the end of the season, shy of the traps, from having been often caught, it will be necessary to drive them in with spaniels. Should this be the case, you will find them very thick round the warren; for the warren-hares will be unwilling to leave it, and, when disturbed by dogs, will immediately go in.

If you turn them out before greyhounds, you cannot give them too much law; if before hounds, you cannot give them too little: for reasons which I will give you presently. Though hares, as I told you before, never run so well before hounds, as when they do not know where they are; yet before greyhounds it is the reverse; and your trap-hares, to run well, should always be turned out within their knowledge: They are naturally timid, and are easily disheartened, when they have no point to make to, for safety.

If you turn out any before your hounds, (which, if it is not your wish, I shall by no means recommend,) do not give them much time, but lay on your hounds as soon as they are out of view: if you do not, they will very likely stop, which is often fatal.—Views are at all times to be avoided, but particularly with trap-hares; for, as these

know not what they are, the hounds have too great an advantage over them.—It is best to turn them down the wind; they hear the hounds better, and seldom turn again.—Hounds for this business, should not be too fleet.—These hares, run straight and make no doubles; they leave a strong scent, and have other objections in common with animals turned out before hounds; they may give you a gallop, but they will shew but little hunting.—The hounds are to be hunted like a pack of fox-hounds, as a trap-hare runs very much in the same manner, and will even top the hedges. What I should prefer to catching the hares in traps, would be, a warren in the midst of an open country, which might be stopped close on hunting-days. This would supply the whole country with hares, which, after one turn round the warren, would most probably run straight an end. The number of hares a warren will supply, is hardly to be conceived; I seldom turned out less in one year than thirty brace of trap hares; besides a great many more killed in the environs, of which no account was taken. My warren is a wood of near thirty acres; one of half the size would answer the purpose to the full as well. Mine is cut out, into many walks; a smaller warren should have only *one* and *that* round the outside of it. No dog should ever be suffered to go into

it:

it: and traps should be constantly set for stoats and polecats.—It is said, parsley makes hares strong; they certainly are very fond of eating it: it therefore cannot be amiss to sow some within the warren, as it will be a means of keeping your hares more at home.

I had once some conversation with a gentleman about the running of my trap-hares, who said he had been told that the catching a hare, and tying *a piece of ribbon to her ear*, was a sure way to make her run *strait*.—I make no doubt of it—and so would *a canister tyed to her tail*.

I am sorry you should think I began my first letter on the subject of hare-hunting, in a manner that might offend any of my brother sportsmen. It was not hare-hunting I meant to depreciate, but the country I hunted hare in.—It is very good diversion in a good country:—you are always certain of sport; and if you really love to see your hounds hunt, the hare, when properly hunted, will shew you more of it, than any other animal.

You ask me, what is the right time to leave off hare-hunting?—You should be guided in that by the season: you should never hunt after

 March;

March; and, if the season is forward, you should leave off sooner.

Having now so considerably exceeded the plan I first proposed, you may wonder, if I omit to say any thing of *stag-hunting*. Believe me, if I do, it will not be for want of respect, but because I have seen very little of it. It is true, I hunted, two winters at Turin; but their hunting, you know, is no more like ours, than is the hot meal you *there* stand up to eat, to the English breakfast you sit down to *here*.—Were I to describe their manner of hunting, their infinity of dogs, their number of huntsmen, their relays of horses, their great saddles, great bitts, and jack boots, it would be no more to our present purpose, than the description of a wild boar chace in Germany, or the hunting of jackalls in Bengal. *C'est une chasse magnifique, et voila tout.*—However, to give you an idea of their huntsmen, I must tell you that one day, the stag (which is very unusual) broke cover, and left the forest; a circumstance, which gave as much pleasure to me, as displeasure to all the rest—it put everything into confusion.—I followed one of the huntsmen, thinking he knew the country best, but it was not long before we were separated; the first ditch we came to stopped him: I, eager to go on, halloo'd out to him

him, *allons, Piqueur, sautez donc.*—"*Non par-*" "*di,*" replied he, very coolly, "*c'est un double*" "*fossé—je ne saute pas des double fossés.*"—— There was also an odd accident the same day, which, as it happened to a great man, even to the King himself, you may think interesting; besides it was the occasion of a *bot mot* worth your hearing—The King, eager in the pursuit, rode into a bog, and was dismounted—he was not hurt—he was soon on his legs, and we were all standing round him.—One of his old Generals, who was at some distance behind, no sooner saw the King off his horse, but he rode up full gallop to know the cause, "*Qu'est ce que c'est! qu'est*" "*ce que c'est*" cries the old general, and in he tumbles into the same bog. Count Kevenhuller, with great humour replied, pointing to the place, "*voila ce que c'est! voila ce que c'est.*"—

With regard to the stag-hunting in this country, as I have already told you, I know but little of it; you will without doubt think that a good reason for my saying nothing about it.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

In some of the preceding letters we have, I think, settled the business of the kennel in all its parts, and determined what should be the number, and what are the necessary qualifications of the attendants on the hounds: we also agree in opinion, that a pack should consist of about twenty-five couple; I shall now proceed to give some account of the use of them. You desire I would be as particular, as if you were to hunt the hounds yourself: To obey you, therefore, I think I had better send you a description of an imaginary chace, in which I shall be at liberty to describe such events as probably may happen, and to which your present inquiries seem most to lead; a further and more circumstantial explanation of them will necessarily become the subject of my future letters. I am at the same time well aware of the difficulties attending such an undertaking. A fox-chace is not easy to be described—yet as even a faint description of it may serve, to a certain degree, as an answer

answer to the various questions you are pleased to make concerning that diversion, I shall prosecute my attempt in such a manner, as I think may suit your purpose best.—As I fear it may read ill, it shall not be long. A gentleman, to whose understanding nature had most evidently been sparing of her gifts, as often as he took up a book and met with a passage which he could not comprehend, was used to write in the margin opposite *matiere embrouillée*, and gave himself no further concern about it. As different causes have been known to produce the same effects, should *you* treat *me* in like manner, I shall think it the severest censure that can be passed upon me. Our friend Somervile, I apprehend, was no great fox-hunter; yet all he says on the subject of hunting is so sensible and just, that I shall turn to his account of fox-hunting, and quote it where I can. —The hour in the morning, most favourable to the diversion, is certainly an early one; nor do I think I can fix it better than to say, the hounds should be at the cover at sun-rising. Let us suppose we are arrived at the cover side.—

"———— Delightful scene!
Where all around is gay, men, horses, dogs;
And in each smiling countenance appears
Fresh blooming health, and universal joy. Som.

Now let your huntsman throw in his hounds as quietly as he can, and let the two whippers-in keep wide of him on either hand, so that a single hound may not escape them; let them be attentive to his halloo, and be ready to encourage, or, rate, as that directs; he will, of course, draw up the wind, for reasons which I shall give in another place.—Now if you can keep your brother sportsmen in order, and put any discretion into them, you are in luck; they more frequently do harm than good: if it be possible, persuade those, who wish to halloo the fox off, to stand quiet under the cover side, and on no account to halloo him too soon: if they do, he most certainly will turn back again: could you entice them all into the cover, your sport, in all probability, would not be the worse for it.

How well the hounds spread the cover! the huntsman you see is quite deserted, and his horse, which so lately had a crowd at his heels, has not now one attendant left. How steadily they draw! you hear not a single hound; yet none are idle. Is not this better than to be subject to continual disappointment, from the eternal babbling of unsteady hounds?

"See

The fox found.

"———— See! how they range
Dispers'd, how busily this way and that,
They cross, examining with curious nose
Each likely haunt. Hark! on the drag I hear
Their doubtful notes, preluding to a cry
More nobly full, and swell'd with every mouth."

Som.

How musical their tongues!—Now as they get nearer to him, how the chorus fills! Hark! he is found.—Now, where are all your sorrows, and your cares, ye gloomy souls! Or where your pains and aches, ye complaining ones! one halloo has dispelled them all.—What a crash they make! and echo seemingly takes pleasure to repeat the sound. The astonished traveller forsakes his road, lured by its melody; the listening ploughman now stops his plough; and every distant shepherd neglects his flock, and runs to see him break. What joy! what eagerness in every face!

"How happy art thou, man, when thou'rt no more
Thy self! when all the pangs that grind thy soul,
In rapture and in sweet oblivion lost,
Yield a short interval, and ease from pain!"

Som.

Mark how he runs the cover's utmost limits, yet dares not venture forth; the hounds are still too near.—

The emulation of the hounds.

near.—That check is lucky;—now, if our friends head him not, he will soon be off—hark! they halloo: by G—d he's gone.

> " ———— Hark! what loud shouts
> Re-echo thro' the groves! he breaks away:
> Shrill horns proclaim his flight. Each straggling hound
> Strains o'er the lawn to reach the distant pack.
> 'Tis triumph all, and joy."

Now huntsman get on with the head hounds; the whipper-in will bring on the others after you; keep an attentive eye on the leading hounds, that should the scent fail them, you may know at least how far they brought it.

Mind *Galloper*, how he leads them!—It is difficult to distinguish which is first, they run in such a stile; yet *he* is the foremost hound.—The goodness of his nose is not less excellent than his speed:—How he carries the scent! and when he loses it, see how eagerly he flings to recover it again—There—now he's at head again—see how they top the hedge!——Now, how they mount the hill!——Observe what a head they carry; and shew me, if you can, one shuffler or skirter amongst them all: are they not like a parcel of brave fellows, who, when they undertake a thing, determine

determine to share its fatigue and its dangers equally amongst them.

> "—— Far o'er the rocky hills we range,
> And dangerous our course; but in the brave
> True courage never fails. In vain the stream
> In foaming eddies whirls, in vain the ditch
> Wide-gaping threatens death. The craggy steep,
> Where the poor dizzy shepherd crawls with care,
> And clings to every twig, gives us no pain;
> But down we sweep, as stoops the falcon bold
> To pounce his prey. Then up th' opponent hill,
> By the swift motion slung, we mount aloft:
> So ships in winter seas now sliding sink
> Adown the steepy wave, then toss'd on high
> Ride on the billows, and defy the storm."
>
> SOM.

It *was* then the fox I saw as we came down the hill;—those crows directed me which way to look, and the sheep ran from him, as he past along. The hounds are now on the very spot, yet the sheep stop them not, for they dash beyond them. Now see with what eagerness they cross the plain.—*Galloper* no longer keeps his place, *Brusher* takes it; see how he flings for the scent, and how impetuously he runs!—How eagerly he took the lead, and how he strives to keep it; yet *Victor* comes up apace.—He reaches him!—See what an excellent race it is between them!—— It is doubtful which will reach the cover first.—

How

How equally they run;—how eagerly they strain;—now Victor,—Victor!—— Ah! Brusher, you are beat; Victor first tops the hedge.—See there! see how they all take it in their strokes! the hedge cracks with their weight; so many jump at once.——

Now hastes the whipper-in to the other side the cover; he is right, unless he heads the fox.

"Heav'ns! what melodious strains! how beat our hearts
Big with tumultuous joy! the loaded gales
Breathe harmony; and as the tempest drives
From wood to wood, thro' ev'ry dark recess
The forest thunders, and the mountains shake." SOM.

Listen!—the hounds have turned. They are now in two parts: The fox has been headed back, and we have changed at last.—

Now, my lad, mind the huntsman's halloo, and stop to those hounds which he encourages.—He is right;—that, doubtless, is the hunted fox;—Now they are off again.—

"What lengths we pass! where will the wand'ring chace
Lead us bewilder'd! smooth as swallows skim
The new-shorn mead, and far more swift we fly.
See my brave pack; how to the head they press,

A check.

Jostling in close array, then more diffuse
Obliquely wheel, while from their op'ning mouths
The vollied thunder breaks.
——————— Look back and view
The strange confusion of the vale below,
Where sore vexation reigns;————
——————— Old age laments
His vigour spent: the tall, plump, brawny youth
Curses his cumbrous bulk; and envies now
The short pygmean race, he whilom kenn'd
With proud insulting leer. A chosen few
Alone the sport enjoy, nor droop beneath
Their pleasing toils."

SOM.

Ha! a check.—Now for a moment's patience.—We press too close upon the hounds.—Huntsman, stand still: as yet they want you not.—How admirably they spread! how wide they cast! is there a single hound that does not try? if such a one there be, he ne'er shall hunt again. There, *Trueman* is on the scent; he feathers, yet still is doubtful; 'tis right! how readily they join him! See those wide-casting hounds, how they fly forward, to recover the ground they have lost! Mind *Lightning*, how she dashes; and *Mungo*, how he works! Old *Frantic*, too, now pushes forward; she knows, as well as we, the fox is sinking.

"———— On! yet he flies, nor yields
To black despair. But one loose m[illegible]e, and all

At fault.

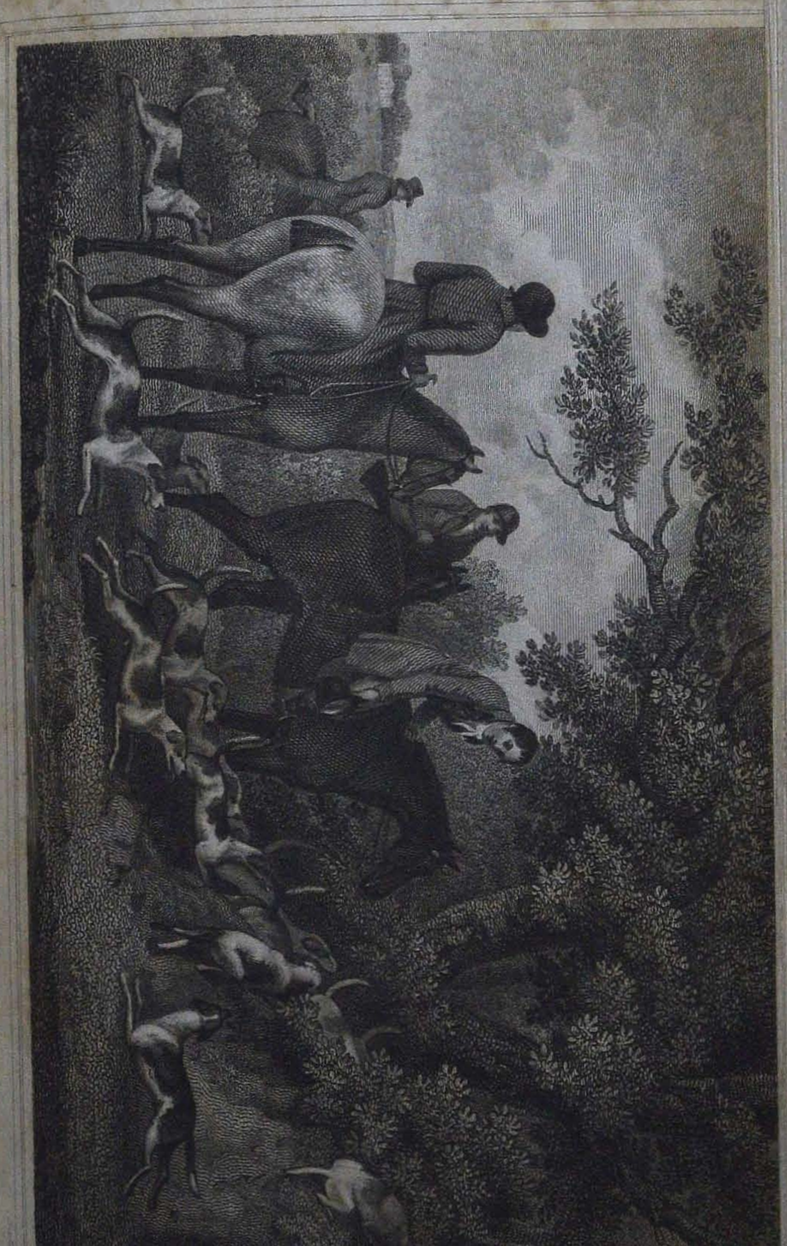
His wiles are vain. Hark! thro' yon village now
The rattling clamour rings. The barns, the cots,
And leafless elms return the joyous sounds.
Thro' ev'ry homestall, and thro' ev'ry yard,
His midnight walks, panting, forlorn, he flies;
——— ——— ——— Th' unerring hounds
With peals of echoing vengeance close pursue."

SOM.

Huntsman! at fault at last? How far did you bring the scent?—Have the hounds made their own cast?—Now make yours. You see that sheep-dog has been coursing the fox;--get forward with your hounds, and make a wide cast.

Hark! that halloo is indeed a lucky one.—If we can hold him on, we may yet recover him; for a fox, so much distressed, must stop at last. We now shall see if they will hunt, as well as run; for there is but little scent, and the impending cloud still makes that little less. How they enjoy the scent; see how busy they all are; and how each in his turn prevails.

Huntsman! be quiet! Whilst the scent was good, you pressed on your hounds;—it was well done. Your hounds were afterwards at fault;—you made your cast with judgment, and lost no time. You now must let them hunt;—with such a cold scent



scent as this, you can do no good.—They must do it all themselves;—Lift them now, and not a hound will stop again.—Ha! a high road, at such a time as this, when the tenderest-nosed hound can hardly own the scent!—Another fault! That man at work, then, has headed back the fox.—Huntsman! cast not your hounds now, you see they have over-run the scent; have a little patience, and let them, for once, try back.

We now must give them time;—see where they bend towards yonder furze brake; I wish he may may have stopped there. Mind that old hound, how he dashes o'er the furze; I think he winds him;—Now for a fresh *entapis*:—Hark; they halloo:—Aye, there he goes.

It is near over with him; had the hounds caught view he must have died.—He will hardly reach the cover;—see how they gain upon him at every stroke! It is an admirable race; yet the cover saves him.

Now be quiet, and he cannot escape us; we have the wind of the hounds, and cannot be better placed;—how short he runs!—he is now in the very strongest part of the cover.—What a crash! every hound is in, and every hound is running for him,

him. That was a quick turn!--Again another!—he's put to his last shifts.—Now *Mischief* is at his heels, and death is not far off.—Ha! they all stop at once;—all silent, and yet no earth is open. Listen!—now they are at him again.—Did you hear that hound catch view? they had over-run the scent, and the fox had lain down behind them. Now, Reynard, look to yourself. How quick they all give their tongues!—Little *Dreadnought*, how he works him! the terriers, too, they now are squeaking at him. How close *Vengeance* pursues? how terribly she presses! it is just up with him.—Gods! what a crash they make; the whole wood resounds.—That turn was very short.—There—now;—aye, now they have him.—Who-hoop.

LET-

Barenger Pinx. Scott sculp.

Remarks on the foregoing letter.

LETTER XIV.

Fox-hunting, however lively and animating it may be in the field, is but a dull, dry subject to write upon; and I can now assure you, from experience, that it is much less difficult to follow a fox-chace, than to describe one. You will easily imagine, that to give enough of variety to a single action, to make it interesting, and to describe in a few minutes, the events of, perhaps, as many hours; though it pretends to no merit, at least some difficulty and trouble: and you will as easily conclude, that I am glad they are over.

You desire me to explain that part of my last letter, which says, *if we can hold him on, we may now recover him.*—It means, if we have scent to follow on the line of him, it is probable he will stop, and we may hunt up to him again. You also object to my saying *catch* a fox; you call it a bad expression, and say, it is not *sportly;* I be-

lieve that I have not often used it; and when I have, it has been to distinguish betwixt the hunting a fox down, as you do a hare, and the killing of him with hard running.—You tell me, I should always *kill* a fox. I might answer—that, I must *catch* him, first.

You say, I have not enlivened my chace with many halloos; it is true, I have not; and what is worse, I fear I am never likely to meet your approbation in that particular; for should we hunt together, then I make no doubt you will think I halloo too much; a fault which every one is guilty of, who really loves this animating sport, and is eager in the pursuit of it. Believe me, I never could halloo in my life, unless after hounds; and the writing a halloo, appears to me almost as difficult as to *pen a whisper*.——

Your friend A——, you say, is very severe on us, fox-hunters;—no one is more welcome. However, he ought to have known that the profession of fox-hunting is much altered since the time of Sir John Vanburgh; and the intemperance, clownishness, and ignorance of the old fox-hunter, is quite worn out; a much truer definition of one might now be made than that which he has left--Fox-hunting is now become the amuse-

ment

ment of gentlemen: nor need any gentleman be ashamed of it.—

I shall now begin to answer your various questions, as they present themselves. Though I was glad of this expedient to methodize, in some degree, the variety we have to treat of, yet I was well aware of the impossibility of sufficiently explaining myself in the midst of a fox-chace, whose rapidity, you know very well, brooks no delay; now is the time, therefore, to make good that deficiency: what afterwards remains on the subject of hunting will serve as a supplement to the rest; in which, I shall still have it in my power to introduce whatever may be now forgotten, or give a further explanation of such parts, as may seem to you to require it. For since my sole view in writing these letters, is to make the instruction they contain of some use to you, if you should want it, if not, to others; the being as clear and as explicit as I can, will be far beyond all other considerations. Repetitions, we know, are shocking things; yet, in writing so many letters on the same subject, I fear it will be difficult to avoid them.

First, then, as to the early hour recommended in my former letter ·—I agree with you, it requires

 explanation;

explanation; but you will please to consider, that you desired me to fix the hour most favourable to the sport, and without doubt, it is *an early one.* You say, I do not go out so early myself:—It is true that I do not; do physicians always follow their own prescriptions?—Is it not sufficient that their prescriptions be good? However, if my hounds are out of blood, I go out early, for then it becomes necessary to give them every advantage. At an early hour you are seldom long before you find.—The morning is the time of the day, which generally affords the best scent, and the animal himself, which, in such a case, you are more than ever desirous of killing, is then least able to run away from you. The want of rest, and perhaps a full belly, give hounds a great advantage over him.—I expect, my friend, that you will reply to this, "that a fox-hunter, then, is not a *fair sportsman.*—He certainly is not; and what is more, would be very sorry to be mistaken for one.—He is otherwise from principle.—In his opinion, a fair sportsman, and a foolish sportsman, are synonimous; he, therefore, takes every advantage of the fox he can.—You will ask, perhaps, if he does not sometimes spoil his own sport by this?—It is true, he sometimes does, but then he *makes* his hounds; the whole art of fox-hunting being to keep the hounds well in blood.

Sport

Sport is but a secondary consideration with a true fox-hunter :—The first is, *the killing of the fox;*—hence arise the eagerness of pursuit, and the chief pleasure of the chace. I confess, I esteem blood so necessary to a pack of fox-hounds, that with regard to myself, I always return home better pleased with an indifferent chace, with death at the end of it, than with the best chace possible, if it ends with the loss of the fox. Good chaces, generally speaking, are long chaces ; and, if not attended with success, never fail to do more harm to hounds, than good. Our pleasures, I believe, for the most part, are greater during the expectation, than the enjoyment: In this case, reality itself warrants the idea, and your present success is almost a sure fore-runner of future sport.

I remember to have heard an odd anecdote of the late Duke of R——, who was very popular in his neighbourhood.—A butcher, at Lyndhurst, a lover of the sport, as often as he heard the hounds return from hunting, came out to meet them, and never failed to ask the Duke what sport he had ? "Very good, I thank you, honest friend."—"Has your Grace killed a fox ?" —"*No* :—We have had a good run, but we have "not killed."—"*Pshaw !*" cried the butcher, with an

†

an arch look, pointing at him at the same time with his finger;—and this was so constantly repeated, that the Duke, when he had not killed a fox, was used to say, *he was afraid to meet the butcher.*

You ask, why the huntsman is to draw so quietly, and why up the wind? With regard to his drawing quietly, that may depend on the kind of cover which he is drawing, and also on the season of the year. If your covers are small, or such from which a fox cannot break unseen, then noise can do no hurt; if you draw at a late hour, and when there is no drag, then the more the cover is disturbed, the better; the more likely you are to find. Late in the season foxes generally are wild, particularly in covers that are often hunted. If you do not draw quietly, he will sometimes get off a long way before you: when you have any suspicion of this, send on a whipper-in to the opposite side of the cover, before you throw in your hounds.—With regard to the drawing up the wind, *that* is much more material. You never fail to give the wind to a pointer and setter; why not to a hound?—Besides, the fox, if you draw up the wind, does not hear you coming; and your hounds, by this means, are never out of your hearing; besides, if he turns down

down the wind, as most probably he will, it lets them all in.—Suppose yourself acting directly contrary to this, and then see what is likely to be the consequence.

You think, I am too severe on my brother sportsmen.—If I am more so than they deserve, I am sorry for it. I know many gentlemen, who are excellent sportsmen, yet I am sorry to say, the greater number of those who ride after hounds, are not; and it is those only that I allude to. Few gentlemen will take any pains, few of them will stop a hound, though he should run riot close beside them, or will place themselves for a moment, though it be to halloo a fox; it is true, they will not fail to halloo, if he comes in their way, and they will do the same to as many foxes as they see.—Some will encourage hounds which they do not know; it is a great fault: was every gentleman who follows hounds to fancy himself a huntsman, what noise, what confusion would ensue! I consider many of them as gentlemen riding out, and I am never so well pleased, as when I see them ride home again. You may perhaps have thought that I wished them all to be huntsmen.—Most certainly not;—but the more assistance a huntsman has, the better in all probability, the hounds will be. Good sense, and a little

little observation, will soon prevent such people from doing amiss; and I hold it as an almost invariable rule in hunting, that those who do not know how to do good, are always liable to do harm: there is scarce an instant, during the whole chase, when a sportsman ought not to be in one particular place: and I will venture to say, that if he is not *there*, he might as well be in his bed.—

I must give you an extraordinary instance of a gentleman's knowledge of hunting.—He had hired a house in a fine hunting country, with a good kennel belonging to it, in the neighbourhood, of two packs of fox-hounds, of which mine was one; and that he might offend neither, intended, as he said, to hunt with both. He offered me the use of his kennel, which, for some reasons, I chose to decline; it was afterwards also offered to the other gentleman, who accepted of it. The first day the hounds hunted his country, he did not appear. The second day, the hounds were no sooner at the cover side, than my friend saw an odd figure, strangely accoutred, riding up, with a spaniel following him. "Sir," said he, "it gave me great concern "not to be able to attend you, when you was here "before; I hope you was not offended at it; for, "to shew you how well I am inclined to assist "your

"your hunt, you see,—*I have brought my little* "*dog.*"

There are two things, which I particularly recommend to you; the one, is to make your hounds steady, the other to make them all draw. Many huntsmen are fond of having them at their horses heels; but, believe me, they never can get so well, or so soon together, as when they spread the cover: besides, I have often known when there have been only a few finders, that they have found their fox, gone down the wind, and been heard of no more that day.

Never take out an old unsteady hound; young ones properly awed from riot, and that will stop at a rate, may be put into the pack, a few at a time; but an old hound, that is vitious, should not escape hanging; let him be ever so good in other respects, I will not excuse him; for a pack must be wretched indeed, that can stand in need of such assistance.—

There is infinite pleasure in hearing a fox well found.—When you get up to his kennel with a good drag, the chorus increasing as you go, it inspires a joy more easy to feel, than to describe.

describe. With regard to my own feelings, I had sooner hear one fox found in this lively manner, than ride the best hare-chace that was ever run.

Much depends on the first finding of your fox. *Dimidium facti, qui bene cœpit, habet*, which we learned at Westminster, is verified here; for I look upon a fox well found, to be half killed. I think people generally are in too great a hurry on this occasion.—There is an enthusiasm attending this diversion, which, in this instance in particular, ought always to be restrained.—The hounds are always mad enough when they find their fox; if the men also are mad, they make mad work of it indeed.—A gentleman of my acquaintance, who hunts his own hounds, and is not less eager than the rest of us, yet very well knows the bad consequences of being so, to prevent this fault in himself, always begins by taking a pinch of snuff, he then sings part of an old song, "*Some* "*say care killed the cat,*" &c.—By this time his hounds get together, and settle to the scent. —He then halloos, and rides as if the d—l drove.

If the fox breaks cover, you will sometimes see a young

a young sportsman set out after him, to ride him. He never fails to ask such a one, " *Do you think* " *you can catch him, Sir ?*"—*No.*"—" Why then " be so good as to let my hounds try,—*if they* " *can.*"

LET-

LETTER XV.

I LEFT off just as I had found the fox: I now, therefore, with your leave, will suppose, that the hounds are running him. You desire I would be more particular with regard to the men.—It was always my intention to be so. To begin then, the huntsman should certainly set off with his foremost hounds, and I should wish him to keep as close to them afterwards as he conveniently can; nor can any harm arise from it, unless he has not common sense. No hounds then can slip down the wind, and get out of his hearing; he will also see how far they carry the scent; a necessary knowledge; for without it, he never can make a cast, with any certainty.

You will find it not less necessary for your huntsman to be active in pressing his hounds forward, while the scent is good, than to be prudent in not hurrying them beyond it, when it is bad.

Your's

Your's, you say, is a good horseman; it is of the utmost consequence to your sport, nor is it possible for a huntsman to be of much use, who is not; for the first thing, and the very *sine qua non*, of a fox-hunter, is to ride up to his head hounds. It is his business to be ready at all times, to lend them that assistance they so frequently stand in need of, and which, when they are first at a fault, is then most critical. A fox-hound, at that time, will exert himself most; he afterwards cools, and becomes more indifferent about his game. Those huntsmen who do not get forward enough, to take advantage of this eagerness and impetuosity, and direct it properly, seldom know enough of hunting to be of much use to them afterwards.

You will perhaps find it more difficult to keep your whipper-in back, than to get your huntsman forward; at least, I always have found it so. It is however necessary; nor will a good whipper-in leave a cover whilst a single hound remains in it; for this reason, there should be two: one of which should be always forward with the huntsman. You cannot conceive the many ills that may happen to hounds that are left behind. I do not know, that I can enumerate one half of them; but this you may be certain of, that the keeping

keeping them together, is the surest means to keep them steady. When left to themselves, they seldom refuse, I believe, any blood they can get; they acquire many bad habits; they become conceited, a terrible fault in any animal; and they learn to tye upon the scent; an unpardonable fault in a fox-hound: besides this, they frequently get a trick of hunting by themselves, and they seldom are worth much afterwards. The lying out in the cold, perhaps the whole night, can do no good to their constitutions; nor will the being worried by sheep-dogs or mastiffs, be of service to their bodies: all this, however, and much more, they are liable to.—I believe, I mentioned in my fourth letter, that the straw-house door should be left open when any hounds are missing.

Every country is soon known, and nine foxes out of ten, with the wind in the same quarter, will follow the same track.—It is easy therefore for the whipper-in to cut short, and catch the hounds again; at least it is so in the country where I hunt. With a high scent you cannot push on hounds too much.—Screams keep the fox forward, at the same time that they keep the hounds together, or let in the tail-hounds; they also enliven the sport, and if discreetly used are always

always of service, but in cover, they should be given with the greatest caution.

Most fox-hunters, wish to see their hounds run in a good style. I confess, I am myself one of those. I hate to see a string of them, nor can I bear to see them creep, where they can leap. It is the dash of the fox-hound which distinguishes *him* as truly, as the motto of William of Wickham, distinguishes *us*. A pack of harriers, if they have time, will kill a fox; but I defy them to kill him in the style in which a fox ought to be killed; they must hunt him down. If you are to tire him out, you must expect to be tired yourself also: I never wish a chace to be less than one hour, or to exceed two: it is sufficiently long, if properly followed;—it will seldom be longer, unless there is a fault somewhere;—either in the day, in the huntsman, or in the hounds. What Lord Chatham once said of a battle, is particularly applicable to a fox-chace:—it should be *short*, *sharp*, and *decisive*.

There is, I believe, but little difference in the speed of hounds of the same size; the great difference is in the head they carry; and in order that they may run well together, you should not keep too many old hounds: after five or six sea-

sons, they generally do more harm than good: if they tye upon the scent, and come hunting after, hang them up immediately, let their age be what it may: there is no getting such conceited devils on; they will never come to a halloo, which every hound that is off the scent, or behind the rest, should not fail to do, and are always more likely to draw you back, than help you forward.

You think me too severe on skirters.—I must confess, that I have but one objection to them, and it is this:—I have constantly seen them do more *harm* than *good*.

Changing from the hunted fox to a fresh one, is one of the worst accidents that can happen to a pack of fox-hounds; and it requires all the observation, and all the ingenuity that man is capable of, to guard against it. Could a fox-hound distinguish a hunted fox, as the deer-hound does, the deer that is blown; fox-hunting would then be perfect. There are certain rules, that ought to be observed by huntsmen. A huntsman should always listen to his hounds, whilst they are running in cover; he should be particularly attentive to the head hounds, and he should be constantly on his guard against a skirter, for if there are two scents,

scents, he must be wrong.——Generally speaking, the best scent is least likely to be that of the hunted fox: and as a fox seldom suffers hounds to run up to him, as long as he is able to prevent it; so nine times out of ten, when foxes are halloo'd early in the day, they are all fresh foxes. The hounds most likely to be right, are the hard-running line-hunting hounds; or such as the huntsman knows had the lead, before there arose any doubt of changing.——With regard to the fox, if he breaks over an open country, it is no sign that he is hard run, for they seldom at any time will do that, unless they are a great way before the hounds. Also, if he runs up the wind—they seldom ever do that, when they have been long hunted, and grow weak; and when they run their foil, *that* also may direct him. All this, as you must needs perceive, requires a good ear, and nice observation, and indeed, in that consists the chief excellence of a huntsman.

When the hounds divide, and are in two parts, the whipper-in, in stopping, must attend to the huntsman, and wait for his halloo, before he attempts to stop either: for want of proper management in this particular, I have known the hounds stopped at both places, and both foxes lost by it.—If they have many scents, and it is

quite uncertain which is the hunted fox, let him stop those that are farthest down the wind, as they can hear the others, and will reach them soonest: in such a case, there will be little use in stopping those that are up the wind.

When hounds are at a check, let every one be silent: but as I have already said so much on that head in my eleventh letter on hare-hunting, I beg le ave to referyou to it. Whippers-in are frequently at this time coming on with the tail-hounds. They should never halloo to them, when the hounds are at fault; the least thing does hurt at such a time, but a halloo, more than any other. The huntsman, at a check, had better let his hounds alone, or content himself with holding them forward, without taking them off their noses. Hounds that are not used to be cast, *a tout bout de champ*, will of themselves acquire a better cast, than it is in the power of any huntsman to give them; will spread more, and try better for the scent; and, if they are in health and spirits, they will want no encouragement.

If they are at fault, and have made their own cast, (which the huntsman should always first encourage them to do) it is then his business to assist them further; but, except in some particular

lar instances, I never approve of their being cast, as long as they are inclined to hunt. The first cast I bid my huntsman make, is generally a regular one; not choosing to rely entirely on his judgment: if that does not succeed, he is then at liberty to follow his own opinion, and proceed, as observation and genius may direct. When such a cast is made, I like to see some mark of good sense and meaning in it:— whether down the wind, or towards some likely cover, or strong earth: however, as it is at best uncertain, and as the huntsman and the fox may be of different opinions, I always wish to see a regular cast, before I see a knowing one; which, as a last resource, should not be called forth, till it is wanted. The letting hounds alone is but a negative goodness in a huntsman; whereas it is true, that this last shows real genius; and to be perfect, must be born with him.—There is a fault however which a knowing huntsman is too apt to commit:—he will find a fresh fox, and then claim the merit of having recovered the hunted one.—It always is dangerous to throw hounds into a cover to retrieve a lost scent; and, unless they hit him in, is not to be depended on. Driven to the last extremity, should a knowing cast, not succeed, your huntsman is in no wise blameable · mine, I remember, lost me a good chace, by persevering

too long in a favourite cast: but he gave me so many good reasons why the fox *ought* to have gone that way, that I returned perfectly well satisfied, telling him at the same time, that, *if the fox was a fool, he could not help it.*

Gentlemen, when hounds are at fault, are too apt themselves to contribute to their remaining so. They should always stop their horses some distance behind the hounds, and, if it is possible to be silent, this is the time to be so: they should be careful not to ride before the hounds, or ride over the scent, nor should they ever meet a hound in the face, unless with a design to stop him.—Should you at any time be before the hounds, turn your horse's head the way they are going, get out of their way, and let them pass you.

In dry weather, foxes, particularly in heathy countries, will run the roads. If gentlemen, at such times, will ride close upon the hounds, they may drive them miles, without any scent. High-mettled fox-hounds are seldom inclined to stop, whilst horses are close at the heels of them.

An acquaintance of mine, a good sportsman, but a very warm one, when he sees the company pressing

pressing too close upon his hounds begins with crying out, as loud as he can, *hold hard.*—If any one persists, after that, he begins moderately at first, and says, *I beg, Sir, you will stop your horse:—Pray, Sir, stop:—God bless you, Sir, stop; God d—n your blood, Sir, stop your horse.*

I am now, as you may perceive, in a very violent passion; so I will e'en stop the continuation of this subject, till I am cool again.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

I ENDED my last letter, I believe, in a violent passion. The hounds, I think, were at fault also. I shall now continue the further explanation of my thirteenth letter from that time.

The first moment that hounds are at a fault, is a critical one for the sport: people then should be very attentive. Those who look forwards, perhaps, may see the fox; or the running of sheep, or the pursuit of crows may give them some tidings of him.——Those who listen, may sometimes take a hint which way he is gone, from the chattering of a magpie, or perhaps, be at a certainty from a distant halloo: nothing that can give any intelligence, at such a time as this, is to be neglected.——Gentlemen are too apt to ride all together: were they to spread more, they might sometimes be of service; particularly, such as from a knowledge of the sport,

sport, keep down the wind; it would then be difficult for either hounds, or fox, to escape their observation.

You should, however, be cautious now you go to a halloo. The halloo itself must, in a great measure, direct you; and though it affords no certain rule, yet you may frequently guess by it, whether it is to be depended on, or not. At the sowing time, when boys are bird-keeping, if you are not very much on your guard, their halloo will sometimes deceive you. It is best, when you are in doubt, to send on a whipper-in to know; the worst then, that can befal you, is the loss of a little time; whereas, if you gallop away with the hounds to the halloo, and are obliged to return, it is a chance, if they try for the scent afterwards: on the other hand, if you are certain of the halloo, and intend going to it, then the sooner you get to it, the better. I have been more angry with my huntsman, for being slow at such a time as this, than for any other fault whatsoever.—— Huntsmen who are slow at getting to a halloo, are void of common sense.—

They frequently commit another fault by being in too great a hurry when they get there. It is hardly credible how much our eagerness is apt,

at such a time, to mislead, our judgment: for instance, when we get to the halloo, the first questions are natural enough:—did you see the fox?—which way did he go?—The man points with his finger perhaps, and then away you all ride as fast as you can; and in such a hurry, that not one will stay to hear the answer which you all were so desirous of knowing: the general consequence of which is, you mistake the place, and are obliged to return to the man, for better information.—Depend upon it, the less hurry you are in, on this occasion, the less time you lose; and wherever the fox was seen for a certainty, whether near or distant, that will not only be the surest, but also the best place to take the scent; and, besides the certainty of going right, you will also, I believe, get on faster than you would by any other means.—

That halloos are not always to be depended on will be sufficiently evinced by the following instances.

My hounds being at a long fault, a fellow hallood to them from the top of a rick, at some distance off. The huntsman, as you will believe, stuck spurs to his horse, halloo'd, till he was almost hoarse, and got to the man as quickly as he

he could: the man still kept hallooing; and as the hounds got near him, "*here*, said he—*here* "—*here the fox is gone*:"—"Is he far before "us?" cried the huntsman—"how long ago "was it that you saw him?"—"No, master, I "have not *seen him*; but *I smelt him* here this "morning, when I came to serve my sheep."—

Another instance was this:—we were trying with some deer-hounds for an out-lying stag, when we saw a fellow running towards us in his shirt: we immediately concluded that we should hear some news of the stag, and set out joyfully to meet him: our first question was, if he had seen the stag? "No, Sir, I have not seen him, "*but my wife dreamt as how she saw him t'other* "*night.*"

Once a man halloo'd us back a mile, only to tell us, *we were right before*, and we lost the fox by it.

A gentleman, seeing his hounds at fault, rode up to a man at plough, and with great eagerness asked him if he had seen the fox.—"The fox, "Sir?"—"Yes, d—n you, the fox; did you ne- "ver see a fox?"——"Pray, Sir, if I may be so "bould, what sort of a looking creature may he

"be?

"be? has he *short ears*, and a *long tail?*" "*Yes.*" —"why then, I can assure you, Sir, I have seen "*no such thing.*"

We are agreed, that hounds ought not to be cast, as long as they are able to hunt; and though the idea, that a hunted fox never stops, is a very necessary one to a fox-hunter, that he may be active, and may lose no time, yet tired foxes will stop, if you can hold them on; and I have known them stop, even in wheel-ruts on the open down, and leap up in the midst of the hounds. A tired fox ought not to be given up; for he is killed sometimes very unexpectedly. If hounds have ever pressed him, he is worth your trouble; perseverance may recover him, and, if recovered, he most probably will be killed; nor should you despair, whilst any scent remains. The business of a huntsman is only difficult, when the scent dies quite away; and it is then he may shew *his* judgment, when the hounds are no longer able to shew *theirs.*—The recovering a lost scent, and getting nearer to the fox by a long cast, requires genius, and is therefore what few huntsmen are famous for.—When hounds are no longer capable of feeling the scent, it all rests with the huntsman; either the game is entirely given up, or is only

only to be recovered by him, and is the effect of real genius, spirit, and observation.

When hounds are at cold-hunting, with a bad scent, it is then a good time to send a whipper-in forward; if he can see the fox, a little mobbing, at such a time as this, may reasonably be allowed.

When hounds are put to a check on a high road, by the fox being headed back, if in that particular case you suffer them to try back, it gives them the best chance of hitting off the scent again, as they may try on both sides at once.

When hounds are running in cover, you cannot be too quiet. If the fox be running short, and the hounds are catching him, not a word should then be said: it is a difficult time for hounds to hunt him, as he is continually turning and will sometimes lie down, and let them pass him.

I have remarked, that the greatest danger of losing a fox is at the first finding of him, and when he is sinking; at both of which times, he frequently will run short, and the eagerness of the hounds

hounds is too apt to carry them beyond the scent.—When a fox is first found, I wish every one would keep behind the hounds, till they are well settled to the scent; and when the hounds are killing him, I wish them to be as silent as they can.

When he is caught, I like to see hounds eat him eagerly. In some countries, I am told, they have a method of *treeing* him; it is of use to make the hounds eager; it lets them all in; they recover their wind, and eat him more readily. I should advise you, at the same time, not to keep him too long, as I do not imagine the hounds have any appetite to eat him, longer than whilst they are angry with him.

The same author, whom I quoted in my tenth letter, and who tells us, how we should *not eat a hare*, is also kind enough to tell us when we *should eat a fox*; I wish he had also added the best manner of dressing him: *voici ce qu'il dit*— "*La chair du Renard est moins mauvaise que* "*c'elle du loup; les chiens et même les Hommes* "*en mangent en automne, surtont lorsqu'il s'est* "*nourri et engraissé de raisins.*"—You would have been better pleased, I make no doubt, if the learned gentleman had told you *how to hunt him*, rather than *when to eat him*.

I shall

I shall end this letter with an anecdote of a late huntsman of mine, who was a great slip-slop, and always called successively, *successfully*. One day, when he had been out with the young hounds, I sent for him in, and asked him what sport he had had, and how the hounds behaved?—"Very "good sport, Sir, and no hounds could behave any "better."—"Did you run him long?"—"They "ran him, and please your honour, upwards of "three hours *successfully*."——"So, then, you "*did* kill him?"—"*Oh, no, Sir, we lost him at* "*last.*"

LETTER XVII.

FOX-HUNTING, an acquaintance of mine says, is only followed because you can ride hard, and do less harm in that, than in any other hunting. There may be some truth in the observation; but to such as love the riding part only of hunting, would not a trail scent be much more suitable? Gentlemen who hunt for the sake of a ride, who are indifferent about the hounds, and know little of the business, if they do no harm, it is to the full as much as we have reason to expect from them; whilst those of a contrary description, do good, and have much greater pleasure. Such as are acquainted with the hounds, and can at times assist them, find the sport more interesting, and frequently have the satisfaction to think, that they themselves contribute to the success of the day. This is a pleasure you often enjoy; a pleasure without any regret attending it. I know not what effect it might have on you; but, I know that my spirits are always good after good sport in hunting;

hunting; nor is the rest of the day ever disagreeable to me afterwards. What are other sports, compared with this, which is full of enthusiasm! fishing is, in my opinion, a dull diversion;—shooting, though it admits of a companion, does not allow of many:—both, therefore may be considered as selfish, and solitary amusements, compared with hunting; to which, as many as please, are welcome. The one might teach patience to a philosopher; and the other, though it occasions great fatigue to the body, seldom affords much occupation to the mind. Whereas fox-hunting is a kind of warfare;—its uncertainties, its fatigues, its difficulties, and its dangers, rendering it interesting above all other diversions.—— That you may more readily pardon this digression, I return to answer your letter now before me.

I am glad to hear that your men have good voices; mine, unluckily, have not. I have a friend, who hunts his own hounds, who has the strangest voice, and the oddest halloo, I ever heard. He has, however, this advantage: no dog can possibly mistake his halloo for another.—Singularity constitutes an essential part of a huntsman's halloo:—it is for that reason alone, I prefer the horn, to which, I observe, hounds fly

more readily than to the huntsman's voice. Good voices certainly are pleasing; yet it might be as well, perhaps, if those, who have them, were less fond of shewing them. When a fox is halloo'd, those who understand this business, and get forward, may halloo him again; yet let them be told, if the hounds go the contrary way, or do not seem to come on, upon the line of him, to halloo no more. With regard to its being the hunted fox, the fox which every man halloos, is the hunted fox in his own opinion, though he seldom has a better reason for it, than because *he* saw him.—Such halloos as serve to keep the hounds together, and to get on the tail-hounds, are always of use; it is the halloos of encouragement to the leading hounds, when injudiciously given, that spoil your sport. I am sorry to say view halloos, frequently, do more harm than good. They are pleasing to sportsmen, but prejudicial to hounds. If a strong cover be full of foxes, and they are often halloo'd, hounds seldom take much pains in hunting them;—hence arises that coldness and indifference, which sometimes may be perceived in fox-hounds, whilst pursuing their game.

You ask me, if I would take off my hounds

to

to a halloo?—If they are running with a good scent, I most certainly would not; if otherwise, and I could depend upon the halloo, in some cases, I think, I would; for instance, when the fox is a great way before them, or persists in running his foil; for such foxes are difficult to kill, unless you endeavour to get nearer to them by some means or other.——When you hunt after them, it frequently happens that the longer you run, the further you are behind.

When hounds are out of blood, and a fox runs his foil, you need not scruple to stop the tail hounds, and throw them in at head; or, if the cover has any ridings cut in it, and the fox be often seen, your huntsman, by keeping some hounds at his horse's heels, at the first halloo that he hears, may throw them in close at him.—This will put him out of his pace, and perhaps, put him off his foil.—It will be necessary when you do this, that the whipper-in should stop the pack from hunting after, and get forward with them to the huntsman.——I have already given it as my opinion, that hounds may be halloo'd too much. —If they are often used to a halloo, they will expect it, and may trust, perhaps, to their ears, and eyes, more than to their noses. If they are often taken from the scent, it teaches them to shuffle,

shuffle, and probably will make them slack in cover: it should be done, therefore, with great caution; not too often; and always should be well-timed. Famous huntsmen, I think, by making too frequent a use of this, sometimes hurt their hounds. I have heard of a sportsman, who never suffers his hounds to be lifted; he lets them pick against the coldest scent, through flocks of sheep: this, is a particular style of fox-hunting, which, perhaps, may suit the country, in which that gentleman hunts. I confess to you, I do not think it would succeed in a bad scenting country, or indeed, in any country where foxes are wild;—whilst hounds can get on with the scent, it cannot be right to take them off from it: but when they are stopped for want of it, it cannot then be wrong to give them every advantage you can.

It is wrong to suffer hounds to hunt after others that are gone on with the scent, for how are they to get up to them, with a worse scent? —Besides it makes them tye on the scent, teaches them to run dog, and destroys that laudable ambition of getting forward, which is the chief excellence of a fox-hound. A good huntsman will seldom suffer his head hounds to run away from him; if it should so happen, and they are still within

within his hearing, he sinks the wind with the rest of the pack, and gets to them as fast as he can. ——Though I suffer not a pack of fox-hounds to hunt after such as may be a long way before the rest, for reasons which I have just given; yet, when a single hound is gone on with the scent, I send a whipper-in to stop him. Were the hounds to be taken off the scent to get to him, and he should no longer have any scent when they find him, the fox would be lost by it. This is a reason, why in large covers, and particularly such as have many roads in them, skirting hounds should be left at home on windy days.

Skirters, I think, you may find hurtful, both in men and dogs. Such as skirt to save their horses, often head the fox. Good sportsmen never quit hounds, but to be of service to them: with men of this description, skirting becomes a necessary part of fox-hunting, and is of the greatest use. Skirters! beware of a furze-brake. If you head back the fox, the hounds, most probably, will kill him in the brake. Such as ride after the hounds, at the same time that they do no good, are least likely to do harm;—let such only as understand the business, and mean to be of service to the hounds, ride wide of them. I cannot however allow, that the riding close up to hounds, is always

a sign of a good sportsman; if it were; a monkey, on a good horse, would be the best sportsman in the field.——Here must I censure, (but with respect) that eager spirit which frequently interrupts, and sometimes is fatal to sport in fox-hunting; for, though I cannot subscribe to the doctrine of my friend ****** "that a pack of "fox-hounds would do better without a hunts- "man, than with one; and that if left to them- "selves, they would never lose a fox;"—yet, if allowing them their usual attendants, he had objected only to the sportsmen who follow them, I must have joined issue with him. Whoever has followed hounds, has seen them frequently hurried beyond the scent; and whoever is conversant in hunting, must know, that the steam of many horses, carried by the wind, and mixed with a cold scent, is prejudicial to it.

It sometimes happens, that a good horseman is not so well in with the hounds, as an indifferent one, because he seldom will condescend to get off his horse. I believe, the best way to follow hounds across a country, is to keep on the line of them, and to dismount at once, when you come to a leap, which you do not choose to take; for in looking about for easier places, much time is lost. In following hounds, it may be useful to

you to know, that when in cover, they run up the wind, you cannot in reason be too far behind them, as long as you have a perfect hearing of them, and can command them; and, on the contrary, when they are running down the wind, you cannot keep too close to them.

You complain, that foxes are in too great plenty; believe me, it is a good fault. I should as soon have expected to have heard your neighbour R—— complain of having too much money; however, it is not without a remedy; hunt the same covers constantly, and you will soon disperse them. If your pack be strong enough, divide it; hunt every day, and you will catch many tired foxes. I remember to have killed a brace in one morning, in the strongest season; the first in ten minutes, the second in half an hour. If your own pack be not strong enough to hunt more than every other day, get a pack of harriers to hunt hare in the cover, the intermediate day. Foxes thus disturbed, will shift their quarters; they know their enemies, and smell in the night, where they have been in the day, and will not stay where they are likely to be disturbed by them. Follow them for one week in this manner, and I do not think you will have any reason, afterwards, to complain that they are in too great plenty.

When

When covers are much disturbed, foxes will sometimes break as soon as they hear a hound. Where the country round is very open, the fox least likely to break is the one which you are hunting; *he* will be very unwilling to quit the cover, if it be a large one, unless he can get a great distance before the hounds. If you are desirous to get a run over such a country, the likeliest means will be, to post a quiet and skilful person to halloo one off, and lay on to him. The further he is before you, the less likely he will be to return. The best method, however, to hunt a cover like this, is to stick constantly to it, not suffering the hounds to break, as long as one fox remains; do this, two or three hunting days following; foxes will then fly, and you will have good chaces.

Nothing is more hurtful to hounds, than the frequent changing of their country; should they change from a good scenting country to a bad one, unless they have luck on their sides, they may be some time without killing a fox; whereas hounds always have a great advantage in a country which they are used to. They not only know better where to find their game, but they will also pursue it, with more alacrity afterwards.

This

A Frenchman's opinion of a fox-chace.

This letter began by a digression in favour of hunting; it will end with the opinion of a Frenchman, not so favourable to it. This gentleman was in my neighbourhood on a visit to the late Lord C——, who, being a great sportsman, thought he could not oblige his friend more, than by offering him to partake of an amusement, which he himself was so fond of; he therefore mounted him on one of his best horses, and shewed him a fox-chace. The Frenchman, after having been well shaken, dirted, tired, run away with, and thrown down; was asked, on his return, "*comment il avoit trouvé la chasse?*"—"*Morbleu! Milord,*" said he, shrugging up his shoulders, "*votre chasse est une chasse diabolique.*"

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

BEFORE I proceed on my subject, give me leave to set you right in one particular, where I perceive I have been misunderstood by you. You say, you little expected to see the abilities of a huntsman degraded beneath that of a whipper-in. This is a serious charge against me, as a sportsman; and though I cannot allow that I have put the cart before the horse, in the manner you are pleased to mention, yet you have made it necessary for me to explain myself further about it.

I must therefore remind you, that I speak of my own country only, a country full of riot, where the covers are large, and where there is a chace full of deer, and full of game. In such a country as this, you that know so well how necessary it is for a pack of fox-hounds to be steady, and to be kept together, ought not to wonder that I should prefer an excellent whipper-in, to an excellent huntsman. No one knows better than you do, how essential a good Adjutant is to a regiment: be-

lieve

lieve me, a good whipper-in is not less so to a pack of fox-hounds. But, I must beg you to observe, that I only mean, that *I could do better with mediocrity in the one, than in the other*—If I have written any thing in a former letter that implies more, I beg leave to retract it in *this.*—Yet I must confess to you, that a famous huntsman I am not very ambitious to have, unless it necessarily followed, that he must have *famous hounds;* a conclusion I cannot admit, as long as these, so famous gentlemen, will be continually attempting to do themselves, what it would be much better if they would permit their hounds to do: besides, they seldom are good servants, are always conceited, and sometimes impertinent. I am very well satisfied, if my huntsman knows his country, knows his hounds, and rides well up to them, and has some knowledge of the nature of the animal which he is in pursuit of; and so far am I from wishing him to be famous, that I hope he will still continue to think, that his hounds know best how to hunt a fox.

You say, you agree with me, that a huntsman should stick close to his hounds.—If then his place is fixed, and that of the first whipper-in (where you have two) is not, I cannot but think genius may be at least as useful in one, as in the

other: for instance, while the huntsman is riding to his head hounds, the whipper-in, if he has genius, may shew it in various ways; he may clap forward to any great earth, that may, by chance, be open;—he may sink the wind to halloo, or mob a fox, when the scent fails;—he may keep him off his foil:—he may stop the tail-hounds, and get them forward; and has it frequently in his power to assist the hounds, without doing them any hurt, provided he has sense to distinguish where he is wanted most. Besides, the most essential part of fox-hunting, the making, and keeping the pack steady, depends entirely upon him; as a huntsman should seldom rate, and never flog a hound.—In short, I consider the first whipper-in as a second huntsman; and, to be perfect, he should be as capable of hunting the hounds, as the huntsman himself.

You cannot too much recommend to your whipper-in to get to the head of his hounds, before he attempts to stop them. The rating behind is to little purpose, and if they are in cover, may prevent him from knowing who the culprits are. When your hounds are running a fox, he then should content himself with stopping such as are riotous, and should get them forward. They may be condemned upon the spot, but the punish-

ment

ment should be deferred till the next day, when they may be taken out on purpose to commit the fault, and suffer the punishment. I agree with you, that young hounds cannot be awed too much; yet suffer not your punishment of them to exceed their offence.—I could wish to draw a line betwixt justice and barbarity.

A whipper-in, while breaking-in young hounds, sometimes will rate them, before they commit the fault: this prevents them, for that time; but they will be just as ready to begin the next opportunity. Had he not better let them quite alone, till he sees what they would be at? The discipline then may be proportioned to the degree of the offence. Whether a riotous young hound runs little or much, is of small consequence, if he be not encouraged: it is the blood only that signifies, which in every kind of riot should carefully be prevented.

My general orders to my whipper-in, are, if when he rates a hound, the hound does not mind him, to take him up immediately, and give him a severe flogging. Whippers-in are too apt to continue rating, even when they find that rating does not avail. There is but one way to stop such hounds, which is, to get to the heads of them.——

them.——I also tell him, never on any account to strike a hound, unless the hound is at the same time sensible what it is for;—never to strike a hound that does not deserve it, and to strike those hard that do.

It is seldom necessary to flog hounds to make them obedient, since obedience is the first lesson they are taught. Yet, if any are more riotous than the rest, they may receive a few cuts in the morning, before they leave the kennel.

When hounds are unsteady, every possible means should be taken to make them otherwise. —A hare, or a deer, put into the kennel amongst them, may then be necessary. Huntsmen are too fond of kennel discipline. You already know my opinion of it. I never allow it, but in cases of great necessity.—I then am always present myself, to prevent the excess of it. To prevent an improper and barbarous use of such discipline, I have already told you, is one of the chief objects of these letters.—If what Montaigne says be true, "that there is a certain general claim of kindness "and benevolence, which every creature has a "right to from us," surely we ought not to suffer unnecessary severity to be used with an animal, to whom we are are obliged for so much diversion: and

and what opinion ought we to have of the huntsman, who inflicts it on an animal, to whom *he* owes his daily bread.

Such of my hounds as are very riotous, are taken out by themselves on the days when they do not hunt, and properly punished; and this is continued whilst my patience lasts; which of course depends on the value of the dog.—It is a trial betwixt the whipper-in and the dog, which will tire first; and the whipper-in, I think, generally prevails.—If this method will not make them steady, no other can; they then are looked upon as incorrigible, and are put away.

Such hounds, as are notorious offenders, should also feel the lash, and hear a rate, as they go to the cover; it may be an useful hint to them, and may prevent a severer flogging afterwards. A sensible whipper-in will wait his opportunity to single out his hound; he will then hit him hard, and rate him well; whilst a foolish one will often hit a dog he did not intend to hit; will ride full gallop into the midst of the hounds; will, perhaps, ride over some of the best of them, and put the whole pack into confusion.—This is a manœuvre I cannot bear to see.

Have a care! are words which seldom do any harm; since hounds, when they are on a right scent, will not mind them. Let your whipper-in be careful how he *encourages* the hounds; that, improperly done, may spoil your pack.

A whipper-in will rate a hound, and then endeavour to flog him. A dog, after having been rated, will naturally avoid the whip.—Tell your whipper-in, whenever a hound deserves the lash, to hit him first, and rate him afterwards.

When there are two whippers-in, one ought always to be forward. When there is only *one*, he, to be very perfect, should be a very *Mungo*, *here*, *there*, and *every where*.

You will find it difficult to keep your people in their proper places; I have been obliged to stop back myself to bring on hounds, which my servants had left behind. I cannot give you a greater proof how necessary it is that a whipper-in should bring home all his hounds, than by telling you, that I have lost an old hound for ten days, and sent all the country over to enquire after him; and at last, when I thought no more about him, in drawing a large cover in the country where he had been lost, he joined the pack; he

he was exceedingly emaciated, and it was a long time before he was recovered.—How he subsisted all that time, I cannot imagine. When any of your hounds are missing, you should send the whipper-in back immediately to look for them; —it will teach him to keep them more together.

The getting forward the tail-hounds is a necessary part of fox-hunting, in which you will find a good whipper-in of the greatest use. He must also get forward himself at times, when the huntsman is not with the hounds; but the second whipper-in, (who frequently is a young lad, ignorant of his business) on no account ought to encourage or rate a hound, but when he is quite certain it is right to do it; nor is *he* ever to get forward, as long as a single hound remains behind.

Halloo forward, is certainly a necessary and a good halloo; but is it not used too indiscriminately?—it is for ever in the mouth of a whipper-in. If your hounds are never used to that halloo, till after a fox is found, you will see them fly to it.—At other times, other halloos will answer the purpose of getting them on as well.

Most huntsmen, I believe, are jealous of the

 whipper-

whipper-in; they frequently look on him as a successor, and therefore do not very readily admit him into the kennel; yet, in my opinion, it is necessary he should go there, for he ought to be well acquainted with the hounds, who should know and follow him, as well as the huntsman.

I am sorry to hear your hounds are so unsteady:—it is scarcely possible to have sport with unsteady hounds; they are half tired before the fox is found, and are not to be depended upon afterwards.—It is a great pleasure when a hound challenges, to be certain he is right: it is a cruel disappointment to hear a rate immediately succeed it, and the smacking of whips, instead of halloos of encouragement. A few riotous and determined hounds do a deal of mischief in a pack.—Never, when you can avoid it, put them among the rest;—let them be taken out by themselves, and well chastised, and if you find them incorrigible, hang them. The common saying, *evil communications corrupt good manners*, holds good with regard to hounds; they are easily corrupted. The separating of the riotous ones from those which are steady, answers many good purposes. It not only prevents the latter from getting the blood they should not, but it also prevents them from being over-awed by the smacking of whips, which is too apt to obstruct drawing, and going

deep

deep into cover.—A couple of hounds, which I received from a neighbour last year, were hurtful to my pack. They had run with a pack of harriers; and, as I soon found, were never afterwards to be broken from hare. It was the beginning of the season, covers were thick, hares in plenty, and we seldom killed less than five or six in the morning. The pack at last got so much blood, that they would hunt them as if they were designed to hunt nothing else.—I parted with the two hounds; and the others, by proper management, are become as steady as they were before. You will remind me, perhaps, that they were draft hounds.—It is true, they were so; but they were three or four years hunters; an age when they might be supposed to have known better.——I advise you, unless a known good pack of hounds are to be disposed of, not to accept old hounds. I mention this to encourage the breeding of hounds, and as the likeliest means of getting a *handsome, good*, and *steady pack*: though I give you this advice, it is true, I have accepted draft-hounds myself, and some have been very good: but they were the gift of the friend, mentioned by me in a former letter; and, unless you meet with such another, old hounds will not prove worthy your acceptance:--they never can be very good: and may bring vices along with them, to spoil

your pack. If old hounds are unsteady, it may not be in your power to make them otherwise; and I can assure you from experience, that an unsteady old hound will give you more trouble than all your young ones. The latter will at least stop; but an obstinate old hound will frequently run mute, if he finds he can run no other way: besides, old hounds, that are unacquainted with your people, will not readily hunt for them, as they ought; and such as were steady in their own pack, may become unsteady in yours. I once saw an extraordinary instance of this, when I kept harriers. Hunting one day on the downs, a well-known fox-hound of a neighbouring gentleman came and joined us, and as he both ran faster than we did, and skirted more, he broke every fault, and killed many hares. I saw this hound often in his own pack afterwards, where he was perfecty steady; and, though he constantly hunted in covers, where hares were in great plenty, I never remember to have seen him run one step after them.

I am sorry to hear so bad an accident has happened to your pack, as that of killing sheep; but, I apprehend from your account of it, that it proceeded from idleness, rather than vice. The manner in which the sheep were killed, may give you some

some insight into it; old practitioners generally seizing by the neck, and seldom, if ever, behind. This, like other vices, sometimes runs in the blood: in an old hound, it is, I believe, incorrigible: the best way, therefore, will be to hang all those, which, after two or three whippings, cannot be cured of it. In some countries hounds are more inclined to kill sheep, than they are in others. Hounds may be steady in countries where the covers are fenced; and sheep are only to be seen in flocks, either in large fields, or on open downs; and the same hounds may be unsteady in forests and heathy countries, where the sheep are not less wild than the deer. However, hounds, should they move but a step after them, should undergo the severest discipline; if young hounds do it from idleness, *that*, and plenty of work, may reclaim them; for old hounds, guilty of this vice, I know, as I said before, of but one sure remedy—*the halter*.

Though I so strongly recommend to you, to make your hounds steady, from having seen unsteady packs, yet I must also say, that I have frequently seen the men even more unsteady than the hounds. It is shocking to hear hounds halloo'd one minute, and rated the next.—Nothing offends a good sportsman so much, or is in itself so

so hurtful. I will give you an instance of the danger of it;—my beagles were remarkably steady; they hunted hare in Cranbourn Chace, where deer are in great plenty, and would draw for hours, without taking the least notice of them. When tired of hare-hunting, I was inclined to try if I could find any diversion in hunting of fallow deer. I had been told it would be impossible to do it with the same hounds; and, to put it to the trial, I took them into a cover of my own, which has many ridings cut in it, and where are many deer. The first deer we saw, we halloo'd, and by great encouragement, and constant hallooing, there were but few of these steady hounds but would run the scent.—They hunted deer constantly from that day, and never lost one afterwards.—Dogs are sensible animals; they soon find out what is required of them, when we do not confuse them by our own heedlessness: when we encourage them to hunt a scent they have been rated from, and, perhaps, severely chastised for hunting, they must needs think us very cruel, capricious, and inconsistent.

If you know any pack that is very unsteady, depend upon it, either no care has been taken in entering the young hounds to make them steady, or else the men, afterwards, by hallooing them

on

on improperly, and to a wrong scent, have forced them to become so.

The first day of the season, I advise you to take out your pack where you have least riot, and where you are most sure to find: for, notwithstanding their steadiness at the end of the last season, long rest, may have made them otherwise. If you have any hounds more vitious than the rest, they should be left at home a day or two, till the others are well in blood: your people, without doubt, will be particularly cautious, at the beginning of the season, what hounds they halloo to; for if they should be encouraged on a wrong scent, it will be a great hurt to them.

The first day that you hunt in the forest, be also particularly cautious, what hounds you take out. All should be steady from deer; you afterwards may put others to them, a few at a time. I have seen a pack draw steadily enough; and yet, when running hard, fall on a weak deer, and rest as contented, as if they had killed their fox. These hounds were not chastised, though caught in the fact, but were suffered to draw on for a fresh fox; I had rather they had undergone severe discipline. —The finding of another fox with them afterwards, might then have been of service; otherwise,

wise, in my opinion, it could only serve to encourage them in the vice, and make them worse and worse.

I must mention an instance of extraordinary sagacity in a fox beagle, which once belonged to the Duke of Cumberland. I entered him at hare, to which he was immediately so steady, that he would run nothing else. When a fox was found by the beagles, which sometimes happened, he would constantly come to the heel's of the huntsman's horse: some years afterwards I hunted fox only, and though I parted with most of the others, I kept *him*: he went out constantly with the pack, and as hares were scarce in the country I then hunted, he did no hurt: the moment a fox was found, he came to the horse's heels. This continued some time, till catching view of a fox that was sinking, he ran in with the rest, and was well blooded.——He, from that time to the day of his death, was not only as steady a hound to fox, as ever I knew, but became also our very best finder.——I bred some buck-hounds from him, and they are remarkable for never changing from a hunted deer.—

Your huntsman's weekly return is a very curious one:—he is particularly happy in the spelling.—

My

Curious letter from a huntsman.

My huntsman is author of the enclosed. It may make you laugh, and is perhaps no improper return for yours.

SIR,

HONORED I beg your honouers pardon a thousand times my wicked daufter is brout to bed this day God be praisd the child Is dead har mother nor I new nothing of it nor nobody as I can hear off tis that vile fellow R—— P—— at —— as he has acted such a Roges part she shall not have him by no means I am all most at my wits end I dont now what to do. I bag your honouer will Consider me and Let har stay in har place I dont hear but that all har fellow sarvants likes har very well I have been out with the hounds this day to ayer the frost is very bad the hounds are all pure well at present and horses shepard has had a misfortin with his mare she hung harself with the holter and throd har self and broak her neck, and frac tard skul so we was forsd to knock har In the head from your ever dutyful Humbel Sarvant.

**** ******

Wednesday evening.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

FINDING, by your last letter, that an early hour does not suit you, I will mention some particulars which may be of use to you, when you hunt late: an early hour is only necessary where covers are large, and foxes scarce; where they are in plenty, you may hunt at any hour you please. When foxes are weak, by hunting late you have better chaces; when they are strong, give me leave to tell you, you must hunt early, or you will not always kill them. I think, however, when you go out late, you should go immediately to the place where you are most likely to find; which, generally speaking, is the cover that hounds have been least in. If the cover be large, you should draw only such parts of it as a fox is likely to kennel in; it is useless to draw any other at a late hour. Besides, though it is always right to find as soon as you can, yet it is never so necessary as when the day is far advanced;—if you do not find soon, a long and tiresome day is generally the consequence. Where the cover is thick, you should draw it as exactly as

if

if you were tryiug for a hare; particularly if it be furzy; for, when there is no drag, a fox, at a late hour, will lie till the hounds come close upon him. —Having drawn one cover, let your huntsman stay for his hounds, and take them along with him to another: I have known hounds to find a fox after the huntsman had left the cover. The whippers-in are not to be sparing of their whips, or voices, on this occasion, and are to come through the middle of the cover, to be certain that they leave no hounds behind.

A huntsman will complain of hounds for staying behind in cover.—It is a great fault, and makes the hound that has it of little value;—a fault frequently occasioned by his own mismanagement. Having drawn one cover, he hurries away to another, and leaves the whipper-in to bring on the hounds after him; but the whipper-in is seldom less desirous of getting forward than the huntsman; and, unless they come off easily, it is not often that he gives himself much concern about them.—Also, hounds, that are left too long at their walks, will acquire this trick from hunting by themselves, and are not easily broken of it. ——Having said all I can at present recollect of the duty of a whipper-in, I shall now proceed to give you a further account of *that* of a huntsman.

What

What has already been said on the subject of *drawing*, and *casting*, related to the fox-chace described in a former letter. Much, without doubt, is still left to say; and I will endeavour, as well as I am able, to make good the deficiency. ——I shall consider, first, in what manner he should draw; and afterwards, how he should cast his hounds.

The fixing on the country you intend to hunt, a day or two before, is a great hindrance to sport in fox-hunting. You, that have the whole country to yourself, and can hunt on either side of your house, as you please, should never, (when you can help it) fix your place of hunting, till you see what the weather is. The most probable means to have good chaces, is to choose your country according to the wind.

Hounds that lie idle, are always out of wind, and are easily fatigued. The first day you go out after a long frost, you cannot expect much sport; take, therefore, considerably more than your usual number of hounds, and throw them into the largest cover that you have; if any foxes are in the country, it is *there* you will find them. After once or twice going out in this manner, you should reduce your number.

Before

Before a huntsman goes into the kennel to draft his hounds, let him determine within himself the number of hounds he intends to take out; as likewise the number of young hounds that he can venture in the country where he is going to hunt. Different countries may require different hounds: some may require more hounds than others: it is not an easy matter to draft hounds properly; nor can any expedition be made in it, without some method.

I seldom suffer many unsteady hounds to be taken out together; and when I do, I take care that none shall go with them but such as they cannot spoil.

When the place of meeting, and time are fixed, every huntsman ought to be as exact to them as it is possible for him to be. On no account is he to be *before* the time; yet, on some occasions, it might be better, perhaps, for the diversion, were he permitted to be after it.——The course your huntsman intends to take in drawing, ought also to be well understood before he leaves the kennel.

If your huntsman, without inconvenience, can begin drawing at the farthest cover down the wind, and so draw from cover to cover up the wind

wind till you find, let him do it: it will have many advantages attending it: he will draw the same covers in half the time;—your people cannot fail of being in their proper places;—you will have less difficulty in getting your hounds off;—and as the fox will most probably run the covers that have been already drawn, you are certain not to change.

Judicious huntsmen will observe where foxes like best to lie.—In chaces and forests, where you have a great tract of cover to draw, such observation is necessary, or you will lose much time in finding. Generally speaking, I think they are fondest of such as lie high, and are dry and thick at bottom; such also as lie out of the wind; and such as are on the sunny side of hills.—The same cover where you find one fox, when it has remained quiet any time, will probably produce another.

It is to little purpose to draw hazle coppices at the time when nuts are gathered; furze covers, or two or three years coppices, are then the only quiet places a fox can kennel in: *they* also are disturbed when pheasant-shooting begins, and older covers are more likely. The season when foxes are most wild and strong is about Christ-

mas;

mas; a huntsman, then, must lose no time in drawing; he must draw up the wind; unless the cover be very large, in which case it may be better perhaps to cross it, giving the hounds a side wind, lest he should be obliged to turn down the wind at last:—in either case let him draw as quietly as he can.

Young coppices, at this time, are quite bare: the most likely places are four or five years coppices, and such as are furzy at bottom.

It is easy to perceive, by the account you give of your hounds, that they do not draw well; your huntsman, therefore, must be particularly attentive to them after a wet night. The best drawing hounds are shy of searching a cover, when it is wet; yours, if care is not taken, will not go into it at all: your huntsman should ride into the likeliest part of the cover, and, as it is probable there will be no drag, the closer he draws the better: he must not draw too much an end, but should cross the cover backwards and forwards, taking care at the same time to give his hounds as much the wind as possible.

It is not often you will see a pack perfectly steady, where there is much riot, and yet draw well:

well: some hounds will not exert themselves, till others challenge, and are encouraged.

I fear the many harriers you have in your neighbourhood will be hurtful to your sport; by constantly disturbing the covers, they will make the foxes shy, and when the covers become thin, there will be but little chance of finding foxes in them: furze covers are then the most likely places. Though I like not to see a huntsman to a pack of hounds ever off his horse, yet, at a late hour, he should draw a furze cover as slowly as if he were himself on foot. I am well convinced that huntsmen, by drawing in too great a hurry, leave foxes sometimes behind them. I once saw a remarkable instance of it with my own hounds: we had drawn, (as we thought) a cover, which, in the whole, consisted of about ten acres; yet, whilst the huntsman was blowing his horn, to get his hounds off, one young fox was halloo'd, and another was seen immediately after: it was a cover on the side of a hill, and the foxes had kennelled close together at an extremity of it, where no hound had been.—Some huntsmen draw too quick, some too slow.——The time of the day, the behaviour of his hounds, and the covers they are drawing, will direct an observing huntsman in the pace which he ought to go. When you try a furze

a furze brake, let me give you one caution,--never halloo a fox till you see he is got quite clear of it; when a fox is found in such places, hounds are sure to go off well him; and it must be owing either to bad scent, bad hounds, bad management, or bad luck, if they fail to kill him afterwards.

It is usual in most packs to rate, as soon as a young hound challenges. They often are wrong, yet, since it is not impossible that they may sometimes be right, is it not better to have a little patience, in order to see whether any of the old ones will join, before any thing is said to them.

Never hunt your small covers, till you have well rattled the large ones; for until the foxes are thinned and dispersed, where they are in plenty, it must be bad policy to drive others there to increase the number.--If you would thin your foxes, you must throw off at the same cover as long as you can find a fox. If you come off with the first fox that breaks, you do not disturb the cover, and may expect to find there again the next day; but where they are scarce, you should never draw the same cover two days following.

 When

When a fox slinks from his kennel, gets a great way before the hounds, and you are obliged to hunt after him with a bad scent; if you are in a country where foxes are in plenty, and you know where to find another, you had better do it.

While hounds are drawing for a fox, let your people place themselves in such a manner that he cannot go off unseen. I have known them lie in sheep's scrapes on the side of hills, and in small bushes, where huntsmen never think of looking for them; yet, when they hear a hound, they generally shift their quarters, and make for closer covers.—Gentlemen should take this necessary part of fox-hunting on themselves, for the whipper-in has other business to attend to.

I approve not of long drags in large covers; they give too great an advantage to the fox, who frequently sets off a long way before you. This may be prevented by throwing your hounds into that part of the cover, in which he is most likely to kennel: for want of this precaution, a fox sometimes gets so far the start of hounds, that they are not able to do any thing with him afterwards. Also, when hounds first touch on a drag, some huntsmen are so careless, that while they are going on with it the wrong way themselves, a single

single hound finds the fox, and is not caught any more by the pack, till he has lost him again.

Foxes are said to go down the wind to their kennel; but, I believe, they do not always observe that rule.

Huntsmen, whilst their hounds are drawing, or are at a fault, frequently make so much noise themselves, that they can hear nothing else: they should always have an ear to a halloo. I once saw an extraordinary instance of the want of it in my own huntsman, who was making so much noise with his hounds, which were then at a fault, that a man halloo'd a long while before he heard him; and when he did hear him, so little did he know whence the halloo came, that he rode a couple of miles the wrong way, and lost the fox.

When hounds approach a cover which it is intended they should draw, and dash away towards it, whippers-in ride after them to stop them. It is too late, and they had better let them alone; it checks them in their drawing, and is of no kind of use; it will be soon enough to begin to rate when they have found, and hunt improper game; if a huntsman has his hounds under good command,

mand, and is attentive to them, they will not break off till he chooses they should. If he goes by the side of a cover which he does not intend to draw, his whippers-in must be in their proper places; but if he rides up to a cover with them unawed, uncontrouled; a cover where they have been used to find, they must be slack indeed, if they do not dash into it. It is for that reason better, I think, not to come to a cover always the same way; hounds, by not knowing what is going forward, will be less likely to break off, and will draw more quietly. I have seen hounds so flashy, that they would break away from the huntsman as soon as they saw a cover; and I have seen the same hounds stop, when they got to the cover side, and not go into it. It is want of proper discipline which occasions faults like these.—Hounds that are under such command as never to leave their huntsman till he encourages them to do it, will be then so confident, that they will not return to him again.

Were fox-hounds to stop, like stop-hounds, at the smack of a whip, they would not do their business the worse for it, and it would give you many advantages very essential to your sport:—such, as when they have to wait under a cover side;—when they run riot;—when they change

 scents;—

scents;—when a single hound is on before;—and when a fox is headed back into a cover. Hounds that are not under good command, subject you to many inconveniencies; and you may, at times, be obliged to go out of your way, or be made to draw a cover against your will. A famous pack of hounds, in my neighbourhood, I mean, the late Lord C——n's, had no fault but what had its rise from bad management; nor is it possible to do any thing with a pack of fox-hounds, unless they are obedient. They should both love, and fear the huntsman; they should fear him much, yet they should love him more.—Without doubt hounds would do more for huntsmen, if they loved them better. Dogs, that are constantly with their masters, acquire a wonderful deal of penetration, and much may be done through the medium of their affections. I attribute the extraordinary sagacity of the buck-hound to the manner in which he is treated. He is the constant companion of his instructor and benefactor, the man whom he was first taught to fear, and has since learned to love. Can we wonder that he should be obedient to him? Oft have we viewed, with surprise, the hounds and the deer amusing themselves familiarly together on the same lawn; living, as it were, in the most friendly intercourse; and, with no less surprise have we heard

heard the keeper give the word, when instantly the very nature of the dog seemed changed; roused from his peaceful state, he is urged on with a relentless fury, which only death can satisfy; the death of the *very deer* he is encouraged to pursue. —The business of the day over, see him follow careless and contented, his master's steps, to repose on the same lawn, where the frightened deer again return, and are again indebted to *his* courtesy for their wonted pasture. Wonderful proofs of obedience, sagacity, and penetration! The many learned dogs, and learned horses that so frequently appear, and astonish the vulgar, sufficiently evince what education is capable of; and it is to education I must chiefly attribute the superior excellence of the buck-hound, since I have seen high-bred fox-hounds do the same under the same good masters. But to return to my subject—

Young foxes, that have been much disturbed, will lie at ground. I once found seven or eight in a cover, where the next day I could not find one; nor were they to be found elsewhere: the earths, at such times, should be stopt three or four hours before day, or you will find no foxes.

The

On drawing with unsteady hounds.

The first day you hunt a cover that is full of foxes, and you want blood, let them not be checked back into the cover, which is the usual practice at such times, but let some of them get off: if you do not, what with continual changing, and sometimes running the heel, it is probable you will not kill any. Another precaution, I think, may be also necessary: that is, to stop such earths only as you cannot dig.—If some foxes should go to ground, it will be as well; and if you should be in want of blood at last, you will then know where to get it.

It is usual, when people are not certain of the steadiness of their hounds from deer, to find a fox in an adjacent cover, that they may be on their right scent when they come where deer are. I have my doubts of the propriety of this proceeding: if hounds have not been well awed from deer, it is not fit they at any rate should come among them; but if hounds are tolerably steady, I had rather find a fox with them amongst deer, than bring them afterwards into covers where deer are. By drawing amongst them, they in some degree will be awed from the scent, and possibly may stick to the fox, when once he is found; but should unsteady hounds, when high on their mettle, run into a cover where deer are in plenty, there

there is no doubt, that the first check they come to, they will all fall off. I always have found hounds most inclined to riot, when most upon their mettle ;—such as are given to sheep, will then kill sheep; and such as are not quite steady from deer, will then be most likely to break off after them. When hounds are encouraged on a scent, if they lose that scent, it is then an unsteady hound is ready for any kind of mischief.

I have been more particular than I otherwise should have been, upon a supposition that your hounds draw ill ; however, you need not observe all the cautions I have given, unless your hounds require them.

Some art may be necessary to make the most of the country that you hunt. I would advise you not to draw the covers near your house, while you can find elsewhere ; it will make them certain places to find in, when you go out late, or may otherwise be in want of them. For the same reason, I would advise you not to hunt those covers late in the season ;—they should not be much disturbed after Christmas. Foxes will then resort to them, will breed there, and you can preserve them with little trouble.

Though

On the silence of huntsmen.

Though a huntsman ought to be as silent as possible at going into a cover, he cannot be too noisy at coming out of it again; and if at any time he should turn back suddenly, let him give as much notice of it as he can to his hounds, or he will leave many of them behind him; and should he turn down the wind, he may see no more of them.

I should be sorry that the silence of my huntsman should proceed from either of the following causes.—A huntsman that I once knew (who, by the bye, I believe is, at this time, a drummer in a marching regiment) went out one morning so very drunk, that he got off his horse in the midst of a thick cover, laid himself down, and went to sleep:—he was lost, nobody knew what was become of him, and he was at last found in the situation I have just described. He had however great good luck on his side; for at the very instant he was found, a fox was halloo'd; upon which he mounted his horse, rode desperately, killed his fox handsomely, and was forgiven.

I remember another huntsman silent from a different cause; this was a sulky one. Things did not go on to please him; he therefore alighted from his horse in the middle of a wood, and, as quietly

quietly as he could, collected his hounds about him; he then took an opportunity, when the coast was clear, to set off silently, and by himself, for another cover: however, his master, who knew his tricks, sent others after him to bring him back; they found him running a fox most merrily, and to his great astonishment, they stopped the hounds, and made him go back along with them. This fellow had been often very severely beaten, but was stubborn and sulky to the last.

To give you an idea before I quit this subject, how little some people know of fox-hunting, I must tell you, that not long ago, a gentleman asked me if I did not send people out the day before, to find where the foxes lay.

What relates to the casting of hounds, shall be the subject of my next letter.

LETTER

How a huntsman should cast his hounds.

LETTER XX.

In my seventeenth letter, I gave you the opinion of my friend ****** —— "*that* "*a pack of fox-hounds, if left entirely to them-* "*selves, would never lose a fox.*" I am always sorry, when I differ from that gentleman in any thing: yet I am so far from thinking they never would lose a fox, that I doubt much, if they would ever kill one. There are times when hounds should be helped, and at all times they must be kept forward: hounds will naturally tie on a cold scent, when stopped by sheep, or other impediments; and when they are no longer able to get forward, will oftentimes hunt the old scent back again; if they find that they can hunt no other. It is the judicious encouraging of hounds to hunt, when they cannot run, and the preventing them from losing time by hunting too much, when they might run, that distinguishes a good sportsman from a bad one. Hounds that have been well taught, will cast forward to a hedge of their own accord: but you may assure yourself, this excellence is never acquired by such as are left

left entirely to themselves. To suffer a pack of fox-hounds to hunt through a flock of sheep, when it is so easy to make a regular cast round them, is, in my judgment, the height of absurdity,—it is wilfully losing time to no purpose. I have indeed been told, that hounds at no time should be taken off their noses: I shall only say, in answer to this, that a fox-hound who will not bear lifting, is not worth the keeping; and I will venture to say, it should be made part of his education.

Though I like to see fox-hounds cast wide and forward, and dislike to see them pick a cold scent through flocks of sheep to no purpose, yet I must beg leave to observe, that I dislike still more to see that unaccountable hurry, which huntsmen will sometimes put themselves into, the moment their hounds are at a fault. Time ought always to be allowed them, to make their own cast; and if a huntsman is judicious, he will take that opportunity to consider, what part he himself has next to act; but instead of this, I have seen hounds hurried away the very instant they came to a fault, a wide cast made, and the hounds at last brought back again to the very place from whence they were so abruptly taken, and where, if the huntsman had had a minute's patience, they would have hit off the scent themselves. It is always great

great impertinence in a huntsman to pretend to make a cast himself, before the hounds have made theirs. Prudence should direct him to encourage, and I may say, humour his hounds, in the cast they seem inclined to make, and either to stand still, or trot round with them, as circumstances may require.

I have seen huntsmen make their cast on bad ground, when they might as easily have made it on good. I have seen them suffer their hounds to try in the midst of a flock of sheep, when there was a hedge near where they might have been sure to take the scent; and I have seen a cast made with every hound at their horses heels. When a hound tries for the scent, his nose is to the ground: when a huntsman makes a cast, his eye should be on his hounds; and when he sees them spread wide, and try as they ought, his cast may then be quick.

When hounds are at a fault, and the huntsman halloos them off the line of the scent, the whippers-in smacking their whips, and rating them after him, if he trots away with them, may not they think the business of the day is over?—Hounds never, in my opinion, (unless in particular cases, or when you go to a halloo) should be taken

taken entirely off their noses; but when lifted, should be constantly made to try as they go. Some huntsmen, have a dull, stupid way of speaking to their hounds; at these times, little should be said; and that should have both meaning, and expression in it.

When your huntsman makes a cast, I hope he makes it perfect one way, before he tries another, as much time is lost by going backwards and forwards. You will see huntsmen, when a forward cast does not succeed, come slowly back again; — they should return as fast as they can.

When hounds are at a fault, and it is probable that the fox has headed back, your cast forward should be short, and quick; for the scent is then likely to be behind you: too obstinate a perseverance forward, has been the loss of many foxes. In heathy countries, if there are many roads, foxes will always run them, in dry weather; when hounds therefore, over-run the scent, if your huntsman returns to the first cross road, he probably will hit off the scent again.

In large covers, if there are many roads, in bad scenting days when these roads are dry, or after a thaw, when they carry, it is necessary your huntsman

man should be near to his hounds to help them, and hold them forward. Foxes will run the roads at these times, and hounds cannot always own the scent. When they are at a fault on a dry road, let not your huntsman turn back too soon, let him not stop till he can be certain that the fox is not gone on; the hounds should try on both sides the road at once: if he perceives that they try on one side only, on his return, let him try the other.

If a fox runs up the wind, when first found, and afterwards turns, he seldom, if ever, turns again. This observation may not only be of use to your huntsman in his cast, but may be of use to you, if you should lose the hounds.

When you are pursuing a fox over a country, the scent being bad, and the fox a long way before, without ever having been pressed, if his point should be for strong earths that are open, or for large covers, where game is in plenty, it may be acting wisely to take off the hounds at the first fault they come to; for the fox will go many miles to your one, and probably will run you out of all scent; but if he should not, you will be likely to change at the first cover you come into: when a fox has been hard pressed, I have already

already given it as my opinion, that he never would be given up.

When you would recover a hunted fox, and have no longer a scent to hunt him by, a long cast to the first cover which he seems to point to, is the only resource you have left:--get there as fast as you can; and then let your hounds try as slowly and as quietly as possible: if hunting after him is hopeless, and a long cast does not succeed, you had better give him up. Need I remind you that, when the scent lies badly, and you find it impossible for hounds to run, you had better return home; since the next day may be more favourable. It surely is a great fault in a huntsman to persevere in bad weather, when hounds cannot run, and when there is not a probability of killing a fox. Some there are, who, after they have lost one fox for want of scent to hunt him by, will find another; this makes their hounds slack, and sometimes vitious: it also disturbs the covers to no purpose. Some sportsmen are more lucky in their days than others. If you hunt every other day, it is possible they may be all bad, and the intermediate days all good; an indifferent pack, therefore, by hunting on good days, may kill foxes, without any merit; and a good pack, not-withstanding

withstanding all their exertion, may lose foxes which they deserved to kill.

A perfect knowledge of his country certainly is a great help to a huntsman: if yours, as yet, has it not, great allowance ought to be made. The trotting away with hounds to make a long and knowing cast, is a privilege which a new huntsman cannot pretend to: an experienced one may safely say, a fox has made for such a cover, when he has known perhaps, that nine out of ten, with the wind in the same quarter, have constantly gone thither.

In a country where there are large earths, a fox that knows the country, and tries any of them, seldom fails to try the rest. A huntsman may take advantage of this; they are certain casts, and may help him to get nearer to his fox.

Great caution is necessary when a fox runs into a village: if he is halloo'd there, get forward as fast as you can. Foxes, when tired, will lie down any where, and are often lost by it.—A wide cast is not the best to recover a tired fox with tired hounds;—they should hunt him out,

inch by inch, though they are ever so long about it; for the reason I have just given;—*that he will lie down any where.*

In chaces and forests, where high fences are made to preserve the coppices, I like to see a huntsman put only a few hounds over, enough to carry on the scent, and get forward with the rest; it is a proof that he knows his business.

A huntsman must take care, where foxes are in plenty, that he does not run the heel; for it frequently happens, that hounds can run the wrong way of the scent better than they can the right, when one is up the wind, and the other down.

Fox-hunters, I think, are never guilty of the fault of trying up the wind, before they have tried down; I have known them lose foxes, rather than condescend to try up the wind at all.

When a huntsman hears a halloo, and has five or six couple of hounds along with him, the pack not running, let him get forward with those which he has; when they are on the scent, the others will soon join them.

Let him lift his tail-hounds, and get them forward *after the rest;* it can do no hurt; but let him be cautious how he lifts any hounds to get them forward *before the rest;* it always is dangerous, and foxes are sometimes lost by it.

When a fox runs his foil in cover, if you suffer all your hounds to hunt on the line of him, they will foil the ground, and tire themselves to little purpose. I have before told you, that your huntsman, at such a time, may stop the tail-hounds, and throw them in at head. I am almost inclined to say, it is the only time it should be done.—Whilst hounds run strait, it cannot be of any use, for they will get on faster with the scent, than they would without it.

When hounds are hunting a cold scent, and point towards a cover, let a whipper-in get forward to the opposite side of it: should the fox break before the hounds reach the cover, stop them, and get them nearer to him.

When a fox persists in running in a strong cover, lies down often behind the hounds, and they are slack in hunting him, let the huntsman get into the cover to them. It may make the fox break

break, it may keep him off his foil, or may prevent the hounds from giving him up.

It is not often that slow huntsmen kill many foxes; they are a check upon their hounds, which seldom kill a fox but with a high scent, when it is out of their power to prevent it. What avails it to be told which way the fox is gone, when he is so far before, that you cannot hunt him? A Newmarket boy, with a good understanding and a good voice, might be preferable, perhaps, to an indifferent and slack huntsman; he would press on his hounds whilst the scent was good, and the foxes he killed he would kill handsomely.——A perfect knowledge of the intricacies of hunting is chiefly of use to slow huntsmen, and bad hounds, since they more often stand in need of it. Activity is the first requisite in a huntsman to a pack of fox-hounds; a want of it no judgment can make amends for; but the most difficult of all his undertakings is the distinguishing betwixt different scents, and knowing, with any certainty, the scent of his hunted fox. Much speculation is here required;—the length of time hounds remain at fault;—difference of ground;—change of weather;—all these contribute to increase the difficulty, and require a

nicety

nicety of judgment, and a precision, much above the comprehension of most huntsmen.

When hounds are at a fault, and cannot make it out of themselves, let the first cast be quick; the scent is then good, nor are the hounds likely to go over it; as the scent gets worse, the cast should be slower, and be more cautiously made. This is an essential part of hunting, and which, I am sorry to say, few huntsmen attend to. I wish they would remember the following rules, viz. that with a good scent, their cast should be *quick;* with a bad scent, *slow:*—and that, when the hounds are picking along a cold scent,—*they are not to cast them at all.*

When hounds are at a fault, and staring about, trusting solely to their eyes, and to their ears; the making a cast with them, I apprehend, would be to little purpose. The likeliest place for them to find a scent, is where they left it; and when the fault is evidently in the dog, a forward cast is least likely to recover the scent.

When hounds are making a good and regular cast, trying for the scent as they go, suffer not your huntsman to say a word to them; it cannot do

do any good, and probably may make them go over the scent.

When hounds come to a check, a huntsman should observe the tail-hounds; they are least likely to over-run the scent, and he may see by them how far they brought it: in most packs there are some hounds that will shew the point of the fox, and if attended to, will direct his cast.—When such hounds follow unwillingly, he may be certain the rest of the pack are running without a scent.

When he casts his hounds, let him not cast wide, without reason; for, of course it will take more time. Huntsmen, in general, keep too forward in their casts; or, as a sailor would say, keep too long *on one tack*. They should endeavour to hit off the scent by crossing the line of it.—*Two parallel lines, you know, can never meet.*

When he goes to a halloo, let him be careful, lest his hounds run the heel, as much time is lost by it. I once saw this mistake made by a famous huntsman:—after we had left a cover, which we had been drawing, a disturbed fox was seen to go into it; he was hallōo'd, and we returned. The huntsman,

huntsman, who never enquired *where* the fox was seen, or on *which side* the cover he entered, threw his hounds in at random; and, as it happened, on the opposite side: they immediately took the heel of him, broke cover, and hunted the scent back to his very kennel.

Different countries require different casts; such huntsmen as have been used to a woodland, and inclosed country, I have seen lose time in an open country, where wide casts are always necessary.

When you want to cast round a flock of sheep, the whipper-in ought to drive them the other way, lest they should keep running on before you.

A fox seldom goes over, or under a gate, when he can avoid it.

Huntsmen are frequently very conceited, and very obstinate. Often have I seen them, when their hounds came to a check, turn directly back, on seeing hounds at head, which they had no opinion of. They *supposed* the fox was gone another way; in which case Mr. Bayes's remark in the Rehearsal always occurs to me, "*that if he*
"*should*

"*should not, what then becomes of their sup-*"*pose.*"—Better, surely, would it be, to make a short cast forward first; they then might be *certain* the hounds were wrong, and of course, could make their own cast with greater confidence.—The advantage, next to that of knowing where the fox *is* gone, is that of knowing, with certainty, where he is not.

Most huntsmen like to have all their hounds turned after them, when they make a cast: I wonder not at them for it, but I am always sorry when I see it done; for till I find a huntsman that is infallible, I shall continue to think, the more my hounds spread, the better; as long as they are within sight or hearing, it is sufficient.—Many a time have I seen an obstinate hound hit off the scent, when an obstinate huntsman, by casting the wrong way, has done all in his power to prevent it. Two foxes I remember to have seen killed, in one day, by skirting hounds, whilst the huntsman was making his cast the contrary way.

When hounds, running in cover, come into a road, and horses are on before, let the huntsman hold them quickly on beyond where the horses have been, trying the opposite side as he goes along.

along. Should the horsemen have been long enough there to have headed back the fox, let them then try back. Condemn me not for suffering hounds *to try back*, when the fox *has been headed back;* I recommend it at no other time.

When your hounds are divided into many parts, you had better go off with the first fox that breaks. The ground will soon get tainted, nor will hounds like a cover where they are often changing.

The heading a fox back at first, if the cover be not a large one, is oftentimes of service to hounds, as he will not stop, and cannot go off unseen. When a fox has been hard run, I have known it turn out otherwise; and hounds, that would easily have killed him out of the cover, have left him in it.

When a fox has been often headed back on one side of a cover, and a huntsman knows there is not any body on the other side to halloo him, the first fault his hounds come to, let him cast that way, lest the fox should be gone off; and if he is in the cover, he may still recover him.

Suffer

Suffer not your huntsman to take out a lame hound. If any are tender-footed, he will tell you, perhaps, that they will not mind it when they are out;—probably they may not; but how will they be on the next day? A hound, not in condition to run, cannot be of much service to the pack, and taking him out at that time may occasion him a long confinement afterwards.—Put it not to the trial.

I have seen huntsmen hunt their young hounds in couples. Let me beg of you not to suffer it. I know you would be sorry to see your hounds hanging across a hedge, grinning at each other: yet it is an accident that often has happened; and and it is an accident so likely to happen, that I am surprised any man of common sense will run the risque of it.—If necessary, I had much rather they should be held in couples at the cover side, till the fox is found.

The two principal things which a huntsman has to attend to, are the keeping of his hounds *healthy* and *steady*. The first is attained by cleanliness and proper food; the latter, by putting, as seldom as possible, any unsteady ones amongst them.

When

When a fox is lost, the huntsman, on his return home, should examine himself, and endeavour to find in what he might have done better; he may, by this means, make the very losing of a fox of use to him.

Old tyeing hounds, and a hare-hunter turned fox-hunter, are both as contrary to the true spirit of fox-hunting, as any thing can possibly be. One is continually bringing the pack back again; the other as constantly does his best to prevent them from getting forward. The natural prejudices of mankind are such, that a man seldom alters his style of hunting, let him pursue what game he may; besides, it may be constitutional, as he is himself slow or active, dull or lively, patient or impatient; it is for that reason I object to a hare-hunter for a pack of fox-hounds; for the same ideas of hunting will most probably stick by him as long as he lives.

Your huntsman is an old man; should he have been working hard all his life on wrong principles; he may be now incorrigible.

Sometimes you will meet with a good kennel huntsman, sometimes an active and judicious one in the field; some are clever at finding a fox, others

others are better after he is found; whilst perfection in a huntsman, like perfection in any thing else, is scarcely any where to be met with: there are not only good, bad, and indifferent huntsmen, but there are perhaps a few others, who, being as it were of a different species, should be classed apart;—I mean, such as have *real genius*. It is this peculiar excellence, which I told you in a former letter, I would rather wish my first whipper-in to be possessed of, than my huntsman; and one reason among others, is, that he, I think, would have more opportunities of exercising it.

The keeping hounds clean and healthy, and bringing them into the field in their fullest vigour, is the excellence of a good kennel huntsman: if, besides this, he makes his hounds both love and fear him; if he is active, and presses them on, whilst the scent is good, always aiming to keep as near to the fox as he can; if, when his hounds are at fault, he makes his cast with judgment, not casting the wrong way first, and blundering on the right at last, as many do; if, added to this, he is patient and persevering, never giving up a fox, whilst there remains a chance of killing him, he then is a perfect huntsman.

Did

Did I not know your love of this diversion, I should think, by this time, I must have tired you completely. You are not particular, however, in your partiality to it; for to shew you the effect which fox-hunting has on those who are really fond of it, I must tell you, what happened to me not long ago.—— My hounds, in running a fox, crossed the great Western road, where I met a gentleman travelling on horseback, a servant, with a portmanteau, following him. He no sooner saw me, than he rode up to me, with the greatest eagerness, "*Sir*," said he, "*are you after a fox?*" —When I told him, we were, he immediately stuck spurs to his horse, took a monstrous leap, and never quitted us any more, till the fox was killed. I suppose, had I said, we were after a hare, my gentleman would have pursued his journey.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

YOUR huntsman, you say, has hunted a pack of harriers. It might have been better, perhaps, had he never seen one, since fox-hunting and hare-hunting differ almost in every particular: so much so, that I think it might not be an improper negative definition of fox-hunting to say, it is, of *all* hunting, *that* which resembles hare-hunting the least. A good huntsman to a pack of harriers seldom succeeds in fox-hunting: like old hounds, they dwell upon the scent, and cannot get forward; nor do they ever make a bold cast; so much are they afraid of leaving the scent behind them. Hence it is, that they poke about, and try the same place ten times over, rather than they will leave it; and when they do, are totally at a loss which way to go, for want of knowing the nature of the animal they are in pursuit of. As hare-hounds should scarcely ever be cast, halloo'd, or taken off their noses, they think to hunt their fox-hounds in the same manner; but it will not do; nor could it please you, if it would. Take away the spirit of fox-

hunting,

hunting, and it is no longer fox-hunting; it is stale small beer compared to brisk champaign. You would also find in it more fatigue than pleasure. It is said, *there is a pleasure in being mad, which only mad men know;* and it is the enthusiasm, I believe, of fox-hunting, which is its best support; strip it of that, and you then, I think, had better let it quite alone.

The hounds themselves also differ in their manner of hunting. The beagle, who has always his nose to the ground, will puzzle an hour on one spot, sooner than he will leave the scent; while the fox-hound, full of life and spirit, is always dashing and trying forward. A high-bred fox-hound, therefore, shews himself to most advantage, when foxes are at their strongest, and run an end. A pack of harriers will kill a *cub*, better, perhaps, than a pack of fox-hounds; but, when foxes are strong, they have not the method of getting on with the scent, which fox-hounds have; and generally tire themselves before the fox. To kill foxes, when they are strong, hounds must run, as well as hunt; besides, the catching of a fox by hard-running, is always preferred in the opinion of a fox-hunter. Much depends, in my opinion, on the style with which it is done; and I think, without being sophistical, a distinction might be made

made betwixt the hunting of a fox, and fox-hunting. Two hackneys become not racers by running round a course; nor does the mere hunting of a fox change the nature of the harrier. I have also seen a hare hunted by high-bred fox-hounds; but I confess to you, it gave me not the least idea of what hare-hunting ought to be. Certain ideas are necessarily annexed to certain words; this is the use of language: and when a fox-hound is mentioned, I should expect not only a particular kind of hound, as to make, size, and strength, by which the fox-hound is easy to be distinguished; but I should also expect by fox-hunting, a lively, animated, and eager pursuit, as the very essence of it. Eagerness and impetuosity are such essential parts of this diversion, that I am never more surprised than when I see a fox-hunter without them. One *hold hard*, or reproof unnecessarily given, would chill me more than a north-east wind; it would damp my spirits, and send me home. The enthusiasm of a fox-hunter should not be checked in its career, for it is the very life and soul of fox-hunting. It is the eagerness with which you pursue your game, that makes the chief pleasure of the chace; and what animal do you pursue with the same eagerness you do a fox?

Knowing

Of the general appearance of the fox-hound.

Knowing your partiality to hounds that run in a good style, I advise you to observe strictly yours, when a fox is sinking in a strong cover; *that* is the time to see the spirit of a fox-hound. If they spread not the cover, but run tamely on the line of one another, I shall fear it is a sort that will not please you long.—A fox-hound, that has not spirit and ambition to get forward at such a time as this, is at no time likely to do much good.

You talked, in your last letter, of pretty hounds: certainly I should not pretend to criticise others, who am so incorrect myself; yet, with your leave, I think I can set you right in that particular. Pretty, is an epithet improperly applied to a fox-hound: we call a fox-hound handsome, when he is strong, bony, of a proper size, and of exact symmetry; and fitness is made essential to beauty. A beagle may be pretty; but according to my idea of the word, a fox-hound cannot: but as it is not to be supposed, that you will keep a pack of fox-hounds for the pleasure of looking at them, without doubt you will think goodness more necessary than beauty. Should you ever be ambitious to have a handsome pack of hounds, on no account must you enter an ugly dog, lest you should be tempted to keep him afterwards.

 I once

I once heard an old sportsman say, that he thought a fox, to shew sport, should run four hours at least; and, I suppose, he did not care how slow his hounds went after him. This idea, however, is not conceived in the true spirit of fox-hunting; which is not to walk down a fox, or starve him to death, but to keep close at him, and kill him as soon as you can. I am convinced a fox-hound may hunt too much; if tender-nosed, and not over-hurried, be will always hunt enough; whilst the highest-bred hounds may be made to tye on the scent, by improper management.

It is youth and good spirits which suit best with fox-hunting; slackness in the men, occasions slackness in the hounds; and one may see, by the manner in which hounds hunt, what kind of men they have been accustomed to. The speediest hounds may, by degrees, be rendered slow; and it is impossible for the best to do their business as they ought, unless they are followed with life and spirit. Such men as are slack themselves, will be always afraid of hurrying their hounds too much; and by carrying this humour too far, commit a fault which has nothing to excuse it. The best method to hunt a fox, they say, is never, on any account to cast the hounds; but,

on

on the contrary, to let them tye upon the scent as long as they will, and that they will hit it off at last. I agree with them, partly;—it certainly must be the best method *to hunt a fox*, for by this means you may hunt him from morning till night; and, if you have the luck to find him, may hunt him again the next day:—the likeliest method, however, to catch him, is to take every advantage of him you can.

"All hounds go fast enough with a good scent; but it is the particular excellence of a fox-hound, when rightly managed, to get on faster with an indifferent scent, than any other hound: it is the business of a huntsman to encourage this; *and here, most probably, the hare-hunter will fail.* He has been used to take his time; he has enjoyed, a cold scent like a southern hound; and has sat patiently upon his horse, to see his hounds hunt. It is, to be sure, very pretty to see; and when you consider that the hare is all the time, perhaps, within a few yards of you, and may leap up the next minute, you are perfectly contented with what you are about; but it is not so in fox-hunting. Every minute you lose is precious, and increases your difficulties; and while you are standing still, the fox is running miles. It is a satisfaction to a hare-hunter to be told where his

his game was seen, though a long while before; but it is melancholy news to a fox-hunter, whose game is not likely to stop.—I believe I mentioned to you, in a former letter on hare-hunting, a great fault which I had observed in some harriers from being let too much alone,—that of *running back the heel.*—I have seen a pack of high-bred fox-hounds do the same, for the same reasons.

When hounds flag from frequent changes, and a long day, it is necessary for a huntsman to animate them as much as he can; he must keep them forward, and press them on, for it is not likely, in this case, that they should over-run the scent: at these times the whole work is generally done by a few hounds, and he should keep close to them: *here I also fear the hare-hunter will fail:* if they come to a long fault, it is over, and you had better then go home.

The many chances that are against you in fox-hunting; the changing frequently; the heading of the foxes; their being coursed by sheep-dogs; long faults; cold hunting, and the dying away of the scent; make it necessary to keep always as near to the fox as you can; which should be the first, and invariable principle of fox-hunting. Long days do great hurt to a pack of fox-hounds.

I set

Anecdote

I set out one day last winter from the kennel, at half-past seven, and returned home a quarter before eight at night, the hounds running hard the greatest part of the time. The huntsman killed one horse, and tired another, and the hounds did not recover it for more than a week: we took them off at last, when they were running with a better scent than they had the whole day.—— I remember, after it was quite dark, to have heard a better view halloo from *an owl*, than I ever heard from a sportsman in my life, though I hope that I shall never hear such another.— A long day, nevertheless, *once* or *twice* in a season, is of use to a huntsman;—it shews the real goodness and stoutness of his hounds.

I am glad to hear that your huntsman knows the country which he is to hunt: nothing, in fox-hunting, is more essential than *that;* and it may make amends for many faults.—Foxes are not capricious, they know very well what they are about; are quick, I believe, at determining, and resolute in perseverance. They generally have a point to go to; and, though headed and turned directly from it, seldom fail to make it good at the last; *this*, therefore, is a great help to an observing huntsman.

Suffer not your huntsman to encourage his hounds too much on a bad scenting day; particularly in covers, where there is much riot. *Hark, hark, hark,* which injudicious huntsmen are so fond of upon every occasion, must often do mischief, and cannot do good; whilst hounds are near together, they will get sooner to the hound that challenges, without that noise, than with it. If it be a right scent, they will be ready enough to join; and, if it be a wrong one, provided you let them alone, they will soon leave it;—injudicious encouragement, on a bad day, might make them run something or other, right or wrong.

I know of no fault so bad in a hound, as that of running false; it should never be forgiven: such as are not stout, that are stiff-nosed, or that have other faults, may at times do good, and at their worst may do no harm; whilst such as run false, most probably will spoil your sport. A hound capable of spoiling one day's sport, is scarcely worth your keeping.—Indifferent ones, such as I have above described, may be kept till you have better, to supply their places.

A huntsman should know how to marshal every hound in his pack, giving to each his proper rank and precedence; for, without this knowledge,

ledge, it is not possible he should make a large draft, as he ought. There are, in most packs, some hounds that assist but little in killing the fox, and it is the judicious drafting off of such hounds that is a certain sign of a good huntsman.

My huntsman is very exact; he carries always a list of his hounds in his pocket, and when in a distant country, he looks it over to see if any of them are missing. He has also a book, in which he keeps a regular account where every fox is found, and where he is killed.

Your huntsman, you say, knows perfectly the country he has to hunt, let him then acquire as perfect a knowledge of his hounds: good sense and observation will do the rest, at least will do as much as you seem to require of him; for I am glad to find you had rather depend upon the goodness of your hounds for sport, than on the genius of your huntsman.—It is, believe me, a much surer dependance.

LETTER XXII.

Are not your expectations somewhat too sanguine, when you think you shall have no occasion for bag-foxes, to keep your hounds in blood the first season? It may be as well, perhaps, not to turn them all out, till you are more certain that your young pack will keep good and steady without them. When blood is much wanted, and they are tired with a hard day, one of these foxes will put them into spirits, and give them, as it were, new strength and vigour.

You desire to know, what I call *being out of blood?* In answer to which, I must tell you, that in my judgment, no fox-hound can fail of killing more than three or four times following, without being visibly the worse for it. When hounds are out of blood, there is a kind of evil genius attending all they do; and though they may seem to hunt as well as ever, they do not get forward, whilst a pack of fox-hounds well in blood, like troops flushed with conquest, are not easily withstood. What we call ill luck, day after day, when hounds

hounds kill no foxes, may frequently, I think, be traced to another cause, viz. *their being out of blood;* nor can there be any other reason assigned why hounds, which we know to be good, should remain so long as they sometimes do without killing a fox.——Large packs are least subject to this inconvenience; hounds that are quite fresh, and in high spirits, least feel the want of blood. The smallest packs, therefore, should be able to leave at least ten or twelve couple of hounds behind them, to be fresh against the next hunting day. If your hounds are much out of blood, give them rest: take this opportunity to hunt with other hounds, to see how they are managed, to observe what stallion hounds they have, and to judge yourself, whether they are such as it is fit for you to breed from, or not. If what I have now recommended should not succeed; if a little rest and a fine morning do not put your hounds into blood again, I know of nothing else that will; and you must attribute your ill success, I fear, to another cause.

You say, you generally hunt at a late hour: after a tolerably good run, try not to find another fox. Should you be long in finding, and should you not have success afterwards, it will hurt your hounds: should you try a long time, and not find,

that

that also will make them slack. Never try to find a fox after one o'clock; you had better return home, and hunt again on the next day. Not that I, in general, approve of hunting two days following with the same hounds: the trying so many hours in vain, and the being kept so long off their food, both contribute to make them slack, and nothing surely is more contrary to the true spirit of fox-hunting; for fox-hounds ought always to be above their work. This is another particular, in which hare-hunting, and fox-hunting totally differ; for harriers cannot be hunted too much, as long as they are able to hunt at all. The slower they go, the less likely they will be to over-run the scent, and the sooner, in all probability, will they kill their game. I have a friend, who hunted his five days following, and assured me, he had better sport with them the last day, than he had the first.

I remember to have heard, that a certain pack of fox-hounds, since become famous, were many weeks from a mixture of indifferent hounds, bad management, and worse luck, without killing a fox. However, they killed one at last, and tried to find another.—They found him—and they lost him—and were then, as you may well suppose, another month without killing another fox.—

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This was ill judged; they should have returned home immediately.

When hounds are much out of blood, some men proceed in a method, that must necessarily keep them so; they hunt them every day, as if the tiring them out was a means to give them strength and spirit; this, however, proceeds more from ill-nature and resentment, than sound judgment. As I know your temper to be the reverse of this, without doubt you will adopt a different method; and, should your hounds ever be in the state here described, you will keep them fresh for the first fine day; when, supposing they are all perfectly steady, I do not question that they will kill their fox.

When hounds are in want of blood, give them every advantage: go out early; choose a good quiet morning; and throw off your hounds where they are likely to find, and are least likely to change: if it is a small cover, or furze-brake, and you can keep the fox in, it is right to do it; for the sooner that you kill him, when you are in want of blood, the better.

When hounds are in want of blood, and you get a fox into a small cover, it must be your own fault,

fault, if you do not kill him there: place your people properly, and he cannot get off again. You will hear, perhaps, that it is impossible to head back a fox.——No animal is so shy, consequently no animal is so easily headed back by those who understand it. When it is your intention to check a fox, your people must keep at a little distance from the cover side, nor should they be sparing of their voices; for, since you cannot keep him in, if he be determined to come out, prevent him, if you can, from being so inclined.—All kind of mobbing is adviseable, when hounds are out of blood; and you may keep the fox in cover, or let him out, as you think the hounds will manage him best.

Though I am a great advocate for blood, so necessary, in my judgment, to a pack of fox-hounds; yet, I by no means approve of it, to the extent to which it is sometimes carried. I have known three young foxes chopped in a furze-brake in one day, without any sport. A wanton destruction of foxes, scarcely answering the purpose of blood, since that blood does hounds most good, that is most dearly earned. Such sportsmen richly deserve blank days; and, without doubt, they often meet with them. Mobbing a fox, indeed, is only allowable, when hounds are not

not likely to be a match for him, without it. One would almost be inclined to think blood as necessary to the men, as to the hounds, since the best chace is flat, unless you kill the fox. When you ask a fox-hunter what sport he has had, and he replies it was *good;* I think, the next question generally is, *did your hounds kill?* If he says they did *not*, the conversation ends; but if, on the contrary, he tells you that they did, you then ask a hundred questions, and seldom are satisfied, till he has told you every particular of the chace.

When there is snow on the ground, foxes will lie at earth. Should your hounds be in want of blood, it will, at that time, be easy to dig one to turn out before them, when the weather breaks; but I seem to have forgotten a new doctrine which I lately heard, that blood is not necessary to a pack of fox-hounds. If *you* also, should have taken up that opinion, I have also to wish, that the goodness of your hounds may prevent you from the changing of it again, or from knowing the truth of it.

Before you have been long a fox-hunter, I expect to hear you talk of the ill luck which so frequently attends it.—I assure you, it has provoked me

me often, and has made a *Parson* swear. It was but the other day, we experienced an extraordinary instance of it. We found, at the same instant, a brace of foxes in the same cover, and they both broke at the opposite ends of it; the hounds soon got together, and went off very well with one of them; yet, notwithstanding this, such was our ill luck, that, though the hunted fox took a circle of several miles, he, at last, crossed the line of the other fox, the heel of which we hunted back to the cover, from whence we came: it is true, we perceived our scent worsted, and were going to stop the hounds; but the going off of a white frost deceived us in that also.

Many a fox have I known lost by running into houses and stables. It is not long since my hounds lost one, when hunting in the New Forest; and, after trying the country round, had given him up, and were returned home; when, just as they were going to be fed, in rode a farmer, full gallop, with news of the fox; he had found him, he said, in his stable, and had shut him in. The hounds returned; the fox, however, stood but a little time afterwards, as he was quite *run up* before.

Some years ago my hounds running a fox across an open country, in a thick fog, the fox scarcely out

out of view, three of the leading hounds disappeared all of a sudden, and the whipper-in, luckily, was near enough to see it happen. They fell into a dry well near an hundred feet deep: they and the fox remained there together till the next day; when, with the greatest difficulty, we got them all four out.

Another time, having run a fox a burst of an hour and quarter, the severest, I think, I ever knew, the hounds, at last, got up to him by the side of a river, where he had staid for them. One hound seized him as he was swimming across, and they both went down together.—The hound came up again, but the fox appeared no more.—By means of a boat and a long pole, we got the fox out.—Had he not been seen to sink, he would hardly have been tried for, *under water*, and, without doubt, we should have wondered what had become of him.

Now we are at the chapter of accidents, I must mention another, that lately happened to me on crossing a river, to draw a cover on the other side of it. The river Stower frequently overflows its banks, and is also very rapid, and very dangerous. The flood, that morning, though sudden, was extensive. The neighbouring meadows were all laid under

under water, and only the tops of hedges appeared. There were posts to direct us to the bridge, but we had a great length of water to pass before we could get at it; it was, besides, so deep, that our horses almost swam; and the shortest-legged horses, and longest-legged riders, were worst off.——The hounds dashed in as usual; and were immediately carried, by the rapidity of the current, a long way down the stream. The huntsman was far behind them: and as he could go but slow, he was constrained to see his hounds wear themselves out in an useless contention with the current, in endeavouring to get to him. It was a shocking scene; many of the hounds, when they reached the shore, had entirely lost the use of their limbs; for it froze, and the cold was intolerable. Some lay as if they were dead, and others reeled, as if they had been drinking wine. Our distress was not yet complete; the weakest hounds, or such as were most affected by the cold, we now saw entangled in the tops of the hedges, and heard their lamentations. Well-known tongues! and such as I had never before heard without pleasure. It was shocking to see their distress, and not know how to relieve them. A number of people, by this time, were assembled by the river side, but there was not one amongst them that would venture

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in. However, a guinea, at last, tempted one man to fetch out a hound that was entangled in a bush, and would otherwise have perished. Two hounds remained upon a hedge all night, yet they got together before the morning; when, the flood abating, they were found closely clasping each other, and without doubt, it was the little heat they could afford each other, that kept both alive. We lost but one hound by this unlucky expedition, but we lost all our terriers. They were seen to sink, their strength not being sufficient to resist the two enemies they had to encounter, powerful, when combined,—the severity of the cold, and the rapidity of the stream.

You ask, at what time you should leave off hunting? It is a question which I know not how to answer; as it depends as well on the quantity of game that you have, as on the country that you hunt. However, in my opinion, no good country should be hunted after February, nor should there be any hunting at all after March. Spring hunting is sad destruction of foxes: in one week you may destroy as many, as would have shewn you sport for a whole season. We killed a bitch-fox one morning, with seven young ones, which were all alive: I can assure you we missed them very much the next year, and had many blank

blank days, which we need not to have had, but through our own fault. I should tell you, that this notable feat was performed literally on the first of April. If you will hunt late in the season, you should, at least, leave your terriers behind you.—I hate to kill any animal out of season.—A hen-pheasant with egg, I have heard, is famous eating; yet I can assure you, I never mean to taste it: and the hunting a bitch-fox, big with young, appears to me cruel and unnatural. A gentleman of my acquaintance, who killed most of his foxes at this season, was humourously called, *midwife to the foxes.*

Are not the foxes heads, which are so pompously exposed to view, often prejudicial to sport in fox-hunting? How many foxes are wantonly destroyed, without the least service to the hounds, or sport to the master; that the huntsman may say, he has killed so many brace? How many are digged out and killed, when blood is not wanted, for no better reason?—foxes, that, another day, perhaps, the earths well stopped, might have run hours, and died gallantly at last. I remember, myself, to have seen a pack of hounds kill three in one day; and though the last ran to ground, and the hounds had killed two before, therefore could not be supposed to be in

want

want of blood, the fox was digged out, and killed upon the earth.—However, it answered one purpose you would little expect:--it put a Clergyman present in mind that he had a corpse to bury, which, otherwise, had been forgotten.

I should have less objection to the number of foxes' heads that are to be seen against every kennel door, did it ascertain with more precision the goodness of the hounds; which may more justly be known from the few foxes they lose, than from the number that they kill. When you enquire after a pack of fox-hounds, whether they are good or not, and are told, they seldom miss a fox; your mind is perfectly satisfied about them, and you enquire no further:—it is not always so, when you are told the number of foxes they have killed. If you ask a Frenchman what age he is of, he will tell you that he is in *good health.*—In like manner, when I am asked, how many brace of foxes my hounds have killed, I feel myself inclined to say, the hounds *are good;* an answer, which, in my opinion, goes more immediately to the spirit of the question, than any other I could give; since the number of foxes heads is at best but a presumptive proof of the goodness of the hounds. In a neighbouring country to mine, foxes are difficult to kill, and not easy

easy to find; and the gentlemen, who hunt that country, are very well contented, when they kill a dozen brace of foxes in a season. My hounds kill double that number; ought it to be inferred from thence that they are twice as good?

All countries are not equally favourable to hounds. I hunt in three, all as different as it is possible to be; and the same hounds that behave well in one, sometimes appear to behave indifferently in another. Was the most famous pack, therefore, to change their good country, for the bad one I here allude to, though without doubt they would behave well, they certainly would meet with less success than they are at present used to: our cold flinty hills would soon convince them, that the difference betwixt one fox and another; —the difference of goodness betwixt one hound and another;—are yet but trifles, when compared with the more material difference of a good scenting country, and a bad one.

I can hardly think you serious, when you ask me, if the same hounds can hunt both hare and fox; however, thus far you may assure yourself, that it cannot be done with any degree of consistency. As to your other question of hunting the hounds yourself, *that* is an undertaking, which, if

if you will follow my advice, you will let alone. It is your opinion, I find, that a gentleman might make the best huntsman; I have no doubt that he would, if he chose the trouble of it. I do not think there is any profession, trade, or occupation to which a good education would not be of service; and hunting, notwithstanding it is at present exercised by such as have not had an education, might, without doubt, be carried on much better by those that have.—I will venture to say, fewer faults would then be committed; nor is it probable the same faults would be committed over and over again, as they now are.—Huntsmen never reason by analogy, nor are they much benefited by experience.

Having told you, in a former letter, what a huntsman ought to be; the following, which I can assure you is a true copy, will shew you in some instances, at least, what he ought not to be.

SIR

YOURS I received the 24th of this present Instant June and at your request I will give you

you an impartial account of my man John Grey's Character. He is a Shoemaker or Cordwainer which you please to call it by trade and now in our town he is following the Carding Business for every one that wants him he served his Time at a Town called Brigstock in Northamptonshire and from thence in great Addington Journeyman to this Occupation as before mentioned and used to come to my house and found by rideing my horses to water that he rode a horse pretty well which was not at all mistaken for he rides a horse well and he looks after a kennel of hounds very well and finds a hare very well he hath no judgment in hunting a pack of hounds now tho he rides well he dont with discretion for he dont know how to make the most of a horse but a very harey starey fellow will ride over a church if in his way tho may prevent the leap by having a gap within ten yards of him and if you are not in the field with him yourself when you are a hunting to tutor him about riding he will kill all the horses you have in the stable in one month for he hath killed downright and lamed so that will never be fit for use no more than five horses since he hath hunted my hounds which is two years and upwards he can talk no dog language to a hound he hath no voice speaks to a hound just as if his head were in a drum nor neither does he know

how

how to draw a hound when they are at a loss no more than a child of 2 years old as to his honesty I always found him honest till about a week ago and have found him dishonest now for about a week ago I sent my servant that I have now to fetch some sheep's feet from Mr. Stanjan of Higham Ferrers where Grey used to go for feet and I always send my money by my man that brings the feet and Stanjan told my man that I have now that I owed hinn money for feet and when the Boy came home he told me and I went to Stanjan and when I found the truth of the matter Grey had kept my money in his hands and had never paid Stanjan he had been along with me once for a letter in order for his character to give him one but I told him I could not give him a good one so I would not write at all Grey is a very great drunkard can't keep a penny in his pocket a sad notorious lyar if you send him upon a mile or two from Uppingham he will get drunk stay all day and never come home while the middle of the night or such time as he knows his master is in bed he can nor will not keep any secret neither hath he so much wit as other people for the fellow is half a fool for if you would have business done with Expedition if he once gets out of the town or sight of you shall see him no more while the next morning he serves me so and so you must

must expect the same if you hire him I use you just as I would be used myself if I desired a character of you of a servant that I had designed to hire of yours as to let your know the truth of every thing about him.

I am Sir

Your most humble servant to command

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P. S.

He takes good care of his horses with good looking after him as to the dressing e'm but if you dont take care he will fill the manger full of corn so that he will cloy the horses and ruin the whole stable of horses.

Great Addington
June the 28th 1734.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

I TOLD you, I believe, at the beginning of our correspondence, that I disliked bag-foxes; I shall now tell you, what my objections to them are:—the scent of them is *different* from that of other foxes: it is *too good*, and makes hounds idle; besides, in the manner in which they generally are turned out, it makes hounds very wild. They seldom fail to know what you are going about, before you begin, and if often used to hunt bag-foxes, will become riotous enough to run any thing. A fox that has been confined long in a small place, and carried out afterwards many miles perhaps, in a sack, his own ordure hanging about him, must needs, stink extravagantly. You are also to add to this account, that he most probably is weakened for want of his natural food, and usual exercise: his spirit broken by despair, and his limbs stiffened by confinement; he then is turned out in open ground, without any point to go to: he runs down the wind, it is true; but he is so much at a loss all the while, that he loses a deal of time in not knowing

knowing what to do; while the hounds, who have no occasion to hunt, pursue as closely, as if they were tied to him. I remember once to have hunted a bag-fox with a gentleman, who not thinking these advantages enough, poured a whole bottle of *aniseed* on the foxes back.—I cannot say I could have hunted the fox, but I assure you, I could very easily have hunted the *aniseed*. Is it to be expected that the same hounds will have patience to hunt a cold scent the next day o'er greasy fallows, through flocks of sheep, or on stony roads? However capable they may be of doing it, I should much doubt their giving themselves the trouble. If, notwithstanding these objections, you still choose to turn one out, turn him into a *small* cover, give him what time you judge necessary, and lay on your hounds as quietly as you can; and if it be possible, let them think they find him.——If you turn out a fox for blood, I should, in that case, prefer the turning him into a *large* cover, first drawing it well, to prevent a change. The hounds should then find him themselves; and the sooner he is killed, the better. Fifteen or twenty minutes is as long as I should ever wish a bag-fox to run, that is designed for blood:—the hounds should then go home.

Bag-

Bag-foxes always run down the wind:—such sportsmen, therefore, as choose to turn them out, may at the same time choose what country they shall run. Foxes, that are found, do not follow this rule invariably. Strong earths and large covers are great inducements to them, and it is no inconsiderable wind that will keep them from them. A gentleman, who never hunts, being on a visit to a friend of his in the country, who hunts a great deal, heard him talk frequently of *bag-foxes*; as he was unwilling to betray his ignorance, his discretion, and curiosity kept him for some time in suspence, till at last he could not refrain from asking "*what kind of an animal a bag-*" *fox was?*"—and if it was not "*a species of fox*" *peculiar to that country?*"

A pack of hounds having run a fox to ground immediately after he was found, he was dug and turned out again; and that the operation of turning him out might be better performed, the master of the hounds undertook it himself.—You will hardly believe me, when I tell you, that he forgot the place where he turned him out, and they never once could hit upon the scent.

If you breed up cubs, you will find a fox-court necessary: they should be kept there till they

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are large enough to take care of themselves. It ought to be open at the top, and walled in: I need not tell you that it must be every way well secured, and particularly the floor of it, which must be either bricked, or paved. A few boards fitted to the corners will also be of use to shelter and to hide them. Foxes ought to be kept very clean, and have plenty of fresh water; birds and rabbits are their best food; horse-flesh might give them the mange, for they are subject to this disorder.—I remember a remarkable instance of it. Going out to course, I met the whipper-in returning from exercising his horses, and asked him if he had found any hares;—No, Sir, he reply'd, but I have caught a fox.—I saw him sunning himself under a hedge, and finding he could not run, I drove him up into a corner, got off my horse, and took him up, but he is since dead.—I found him at the place he directed me to, and he was indeed a curiosity. He had not a single hair on his brush, and very few on his body.

I have kept foxes too long: I also have turned them out too young. The safest way, I believe, will be to avoid either extreme. When cubs are bred in an earth near you, if you add two or three to the number, it is not improbable that the old

fox

fox will take care of them. Of this you may be certain;—that if they live, they will be good foxes; for the others will shew them the country. Those which you turn into an earth should be regularly fed. If they are once neglected, it is probable they will forsake the place, wander away, and die for want of food. When the cubs leave the earth (which they may soon do) your game-keeper should throw food for them in parts of the cover where it may be most easy for them to find it; and when he knows their haunt, he should continue to feed them there.——Nothing destroys so much the breed of foxes, as buying them to turn out, unless care is taken of them afterwards.

Your country being extensive, probably it may not be all equally good; it may be worth your while therefore to remove some of the cubs, from one part of it into the other; it is what I frequently do myself, and find it answer. A fox-court therefore is of great use: it should be airy, or I would not advise you to keep them long in it. I turned out one year ten brace of cubs; most of which, by being kept till they were tainted before they were turned out, were found dead in the covers, with scarce any hair upon them; whilst a a brace, which had made their escape by making a hole

a hole in the sack in which they were brought, lived, and shewed excellent sport. If the cubs are large, you may turn them out immediately: a large earth will be best for that purpose, where they should be regularly fed with rabbits, birds, or sheep's henges, which ever you can most conveniently get. I believe, when a fox is once tainted, he never recovers it. The weather being remarkably hot, those that I kept in my fox-court, (which at that time was a very close one) all died, one after the other, of the same disorder.

Where rabbits are plentiful, nature will soon teach them how to catch the young ones; and, till that period of abundance arrives, it may be necessary to provide food for them. Where game is scarce, wet weather will be most favourable to them; they can then live on beetles, chaffers, worms, &c. which they will find great plenty of. I think the morning is the best time to turn them out: if turned out in the evening, they will be more likely to ramble, but if turned out early, and fed on the earth, I think there is little doubt of their remaining there. I also recommend to you, to turn them into large covers and strong earths; out of small earths they are more liable to be stolen, and from small covers are more likely to

wander

wander away. Your game-keepers, at this time of the year, having little else to do, may feed and take care of them. When you stop any of these earths, remember to have them opened again; as I have reason to think I lost some young foxes one year by not doing it. For your own satisfaction, put a private mark on every fox which you turn out, that you may know him again. Your cubs, though they may get off from the covers where they were bred, when hunted will seldom fail to return to them.

Gentlemen who buy foxes, do great injury to fox-hunting: they encourage the robbing of neighbouring hunts; in which case without doubt the receiver is as bad as the thief.—It is the interest of every fox-hunter to be cautious how he behaves in this particular; indeed, I believe most gentlemen are so; and it may be easy to retaliate on such as are not.——I am told, that in some hunts it is the constant employment of one person to watch the earths at the breeding time, to prevent the cubs from being stolen. Furze-covers cannot be too much encouraged for that reason, for there they are safe. They have also other advantages attending them;—they are certain places to find in.—Foxes cannot break from them unseen;—

seen;—nor are you so liable to change as in other covers.

Acquainted as I am with your sentiments, it would be needless to desire you to be cautious how you buy foxes. The price some men pay for them might well encourage the robbing of every hunt in the kingdom, their own not excepted. But you despise the *soi disant* gentleman who receives them, more than the poor thief who takes them.—Some gentlemen ask no questions, and flatter themselves they have found out that convenient *mezzo termino* to settle their consciences by.

With respect to the digging of foxes that you run to ground; what I myself have observed in that business, I will endeavour to recollect. My people usually, I think, follow the hole, except when the earth is large, and the terriers have fixed the fox in an angle of it: for they then find it a more expeditious method to sink a pit as near to him as they can. You should always keep a terrier in at the fox, for if you do not, he not only may move, but also, in loose ground, may dig himself further in. In digging, you should keep room enough; and care should be taken not to throw

thow the earth where you may have it to move again.—In following the hole, the surest way not to lose it, is to keep below it.——When your hounds are in want of blood, stop all the holes, lest the fox should bolt out unseen. It causes no small confusion, when this happens. The hounds are dispersed about, and asleep in different places: the horses are often at a considerable distance; and many a fox, by taking advantage of this favourable moment, has saved his life.

If hounds are in want of blood, and they have had a long run, it is the best way, without doubt, to kill the fox upon the earth; but if they have not run long, if the fox is easy to be digged, and the cover is such a one as they are not likely to change in, it does the hounds more good to turn him out upon the earth, and let them work for him. It is the blood that will do them most good, and may be serviceable to the hounds, to the horses, and to yourself.—Digging a fox is cold work, and may require a gallop afterwards to warm you all again. Before you do this, if there are any other earths in the cover, they should be stopped, lest the fox should go to ground again.

 Let

Let your huntsman try all around, and let him be perfectly satisfied that the fox is not gone on, before you try an earth; for want of this precaution, I dug three hours to a terrier that lay all the time at a rabbit: there was another circumstance which I am not likely to forget,—"that I had twenty miles to ride home afterwards." A fox sometimes runs over an earth, and does not go into it; he sometimes goes in and does not stay; he may find it too hot, or may not like the company he meets with there: I make no doubt that he has good reasons for every thing he does, though we are not always acquainted with them.

Huntsmen, when they get near the fox, will sometimes put a hound in to draw him. This is however a cruel operation, and seldom answers any other purpose than to occasion the dog a bad bite, the foxes head generally being towards him; besides, a few minutes digging will make it unnecessary. If you let the fox first seize your whip, the hound will draw him more readily.

You should not encourage badgers in your woods; they make strong earths, which will be expensive and troublesome to you to stop, or fatal

fatal to your sport if you do not. You, without doubt, remember an old Oxford toast.

> Hounds stout, and horses healthy,
> Earths well stopp'd, and foxes plenty.

All certainly very desirable to a fox-hunter; yet I apprehend the *earths stopped* to be the most necessary, for the others, without *that*, would be useless. Besides, I am not certain that earths are the safest places for foxes to breed in; for frequently, when poachers cannot dig them, they will catch the young foxes in trenches, dug at the mouth of the hole, which, I believe they call *tunning* them. A few large earths near to your house are certainly desirable, as they will draw the foxes thither, and after a long day, will sometimes bring you home.

If foxes are bred in an earth which you think unsafe, you had better stink them out: *that*, or indeed any disturbance at the mouth of the hole, will make the old one carry them off to another place.

In open countries, foxes, when they are much disturbed, will lie at earth. If you have difficulty in finding, stinking the earths will sometimes pro-

duce

duce them again. The method which I use to stink an earth is as follows:—Three pounds of sulphur, and one pound of assafœtida are boiled up together; matches are then made of brown paper, and lighted in the holes, which are afterwards stopped very close.— Earths, that are not used by badgers, may be stopped early, which will answer the same purpose; but where badgers frequent, it would be useless, as they would open them again.

Badgers may be caught alive in sacks, placed at the mouth of the hole; setting traps for them, would be dangerous, as you might catch your foxes also. They may be caught by stinking them out of a great earth, and afterwards following them to a smaller one, and digging them.

Your country requires a good terrier; I should prefer the black or white terrier; some there are so like a fox, that awkward people frequently mistake one for the other. If you like terriers to run with your pack, large ones, at times, are useful; but in an earth, they do but little good, as they cannot always get up to the fox. You had better not enter a young terrier at a badger: young terriers have not the art of shifting, like old ones; and, if they are good for any thing, most

most probably will go up boldly to him at once, and get themselves most terribly bitten; for this reason, you should enter them at young foxes when you can. Before I quit this subject, I must mention an extraordinary instance of sagacity in a bitch-fox, that was digged out of an earth with four young ones, and brought in a sack upwards of twenty miles to a gentleman in my neighbourhood, to be turned out the next day before his hounds. This fox, weak as she must have been, ran in a strait line back again to her own country, crossed two rivers, and was at last killed near to the earth she was digged out of the day before. Foxes that are bred in the cliffs near to the sea, seldom are known to ramble any great distance from them; and sportsmen, who know the country where this fox was turned out, will tell you, that there is not the least reason to think that she could have had any knowledge of it.

Besides the digging of foxes, by which method many young ones are taken, and old ones destroyed, traps, &c. too often are fatal to them. Farmers, for their lambs, (which, by the bye, few foxes ever kill) gentlemen for their game, and old women for their poultry, are their inveterate enemies. I must, however, give an instance of civility, I once met with from a farmer.—The hounds had found,

found, and were running hard; the farmer came up in high spirits, and said, "I hope, Sir, you "will kill him; he has done me much damage "lately; he carried away all my ducks last week: "—I would not *gin* him though—too good a "sportsman for that."——So much for the honest farmer.——

In the country where I live, most of the gentlemen are sportsmen; and even those who are not, shew every kind attention to those who are; I am sorry it is otherwise with you; and that your old gouty neighbour should destroy your foxes, I must own, concerns me. I know some gentlemen, who, when a neighbour had destroyed all their foxes, and thereby prevented them from pursuing a favourite amusement, loaded a cart with spaniels, and went all together and destroyed his pheasants. I think they might have called this very properly, *lex talionis*, and it had the desired effect; for as the gentleman did not think it prudent to fight them all, he took the wiser method,—he made peace with them. He gave an order that no more foxes should be destroyed, and they never afterwards killed any of his pheasants.

LETTER

The subject concluded.

LETTER XXIV.

I AM now, my friend, about to take leave of you; and at the same time that I give repose to you, let me intreat you to shew the same favor to your hounds and horses. It is now the breeding season, a proper time, in my opinion, to leave off hunting; since it is more likely to be your servants amusement, than yours; and is always to the prejudice of two noble animals, which we sportsmen are bound in gratitude to take care of.

After a long and tiresome winter, surely the horse deserves some repose. Let him then enjoy his short-lived liberty, and as his feet are the parts which suffer most, turn him out into a soft pasture. Some there are, who disapprove of grass, saying, that when a horse is in good order, the turning him out undoes it all again.—It certainly does.—Yet this, at the same time, I believe, that no horse can be fresh in his limbs, or will last you long without it.—Can standing in a hot stable do him any good?—and can hard exercise,

cise, particularly in the summer, be of any advantage to him ?—Is it not soft ground and long rest that will best refresh his limbs, while the night air, and morning dews will invigorate his body ?—Some never physic their hunters; only observing, when they first take them up from grass, to work them gently; some turn out theirs all the year. It is not unusual for such as follow the latter method, to physic their horses at grass; they then are taken up, well fed, and properly exercised to get them into order; this done, they are turned out for a few hours every day when they are not ridden. The pasture should be dry, and should have but little grass; there they will stretch their limbs, and cool their bodies, and will take as much exercise as is necessary for them. I have remarked, that thus treated they catch fewer colds, have the use of their limbs more freely, and are less liable to lameness than other horses. Another advantage attends this method, which, in the horses you ride yourself, you will allow to be very material:—your horse, when once he is in order, will require less strong exercise than grooms generally give their horses: and his mouth, in all probability, will not be the worse for it.

The Earl of Pembroke, in his Military Equitation,

tion, is, I find, of the same opinion; he tells us, —" It is of the greatest consequence for horses " to be kept clean, regularly fed, and as regularly " exercised: but whoever chooses to ride in the " way of ease and pleasure, without any fatigue " on horseback, or in short, does not like to carry " his horse, instead of his horse's carrying him, must " not suffer his horse to be exercised by a groom; " standing up on his stirrups, holding himself on " by means of the reins, and thereby hanging his " whole dead weight on the horse's mouth, to the " entire destruction of all that is good, safe, or " pleasant about the animal."— And in another place he says —" Horses should be turned " loose somewhere, or walked about every day, " when they do not work, particularly after hard " exercise: swelled legs, physic, &c. will be " saved by these means, and many distempers " avoided." He also observes that, " it is a mat" ter of the greatest consequence, though few " attend to it, to feed horses according to their " work. When the work is hard, food should be " in plenty; when it is otherwise, the food " should be diminished immediately; the hay " particularly."

I have no doubt that the noble author is perfectly right in these observations: I am also of opinion

opinion that a handful or two of clean wheaten straw, chopped small, and mixed with their corn, would be of great service to your horses, provided that you have interest enough with your groom to prevail on him to give it them.

Such of my horses as are physicked at grass, have two doses given them when they are turned out, and three more before they are taken up. Grass physic is of so mild a kind, that you will not find this quantity too much; nor have I ever known an accident happen from it, though it has been given in very indifferent weather. I should tell you, that my horses are always taken in the night after they take their physic, though the printed directions, I believe, do not require it.— Such horses as are full of humours should be physicked at house, since they may require stronger doses than grass physic will admit of, which, I think, is more proper to prevent humours, than to remove them. The only use I know in physicking a horse that does not appear to want it, is to prevent, if possible, his requiring it at a time when you cannot so well spare him, I mean the hunting season :—should an accident of this kind happen, Stibiums balls, of which I send you the receipt, you will find of the greatest use.

Crocus

Crocus Metallorum, levigated			2 ozs.
Stibiums ditto	—	—	2
Flower of brimstone		—	1
Castile soap	—	—	1
Liquorice powder		—	1

Honey q. s. to make it into a paste.

A ball of one ounce weight is to be given three mornings following.—The horse must be kept fasting for two hours after he has taken it: he then may have a feed of corn, and, soon after that, moderate exercise. The same should be repeated four days afterwards.—These balls purify the blood, and operate upon the body by insensible perspiration.

I frequently give nitre to such of my hunters as are not turned out to grass;—it cools their bodies, and is of great service to them. It may be given them either in their water, or in their corn; I sometimes give an ounce in each.

I think you are perfectly in the right to mount your people well; there is no good economy in giving them bad horses; they take no care of them, but wear them out as soon as they can, that they may have others.

The

The question you ask me about shoeing, I am unable to answer. Yet I am of opinion, that horses should be shod with more or less iron, according as the country where they hunt requires; but in this, a good farrier will best direct you. Nothing certainly is more necessary to a horse than to be well shod. The shoe should be a proper one, and it should fit his foot. Farriers are but too apt to make the foot fit the shoe. My groom carries a false shoe, which just serves to save a horse's hoof, when he loses a shoe, till it can be put on again. In some countries you see them loaded with saws, hatchets, &c. I am glad that the country in which I hunt does not require them. In the book I have just quoted, you will find the shoeing of horses treated of very much at large. I beg leave, therefore, if you want further information on that head, to refer you to it.

Having declared my disapprobation of summer hunting, on account of the horses, I must add, that I am not less an enemy to it on account of the hounds also; *they*, I think, should have some time allowed them to recover the strains and bruises of many a painful chace; and their diet, in which the adding to their strength has been perhaps,

perhaps, too much considered, should now be altered. No more flesh should they now eat; but in its stead, should have their bodies cooled with whey, greens, and thin meat: without this precaution, the mange, most probably, would be the immediate consequence of hot weather, perhaps madness:—direful malady!

As a country life has been recommended in all ages, as much for the contentment of the mind, as health of the body, it is no wonder that hunting should be considered by so many as a necessary part of it, since nothing conduces more to both; a great genius has told us, that it is

> Better to hunt in fields for health unbought,
> Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.

With regard to its peaceful state, a modern poet tells us:

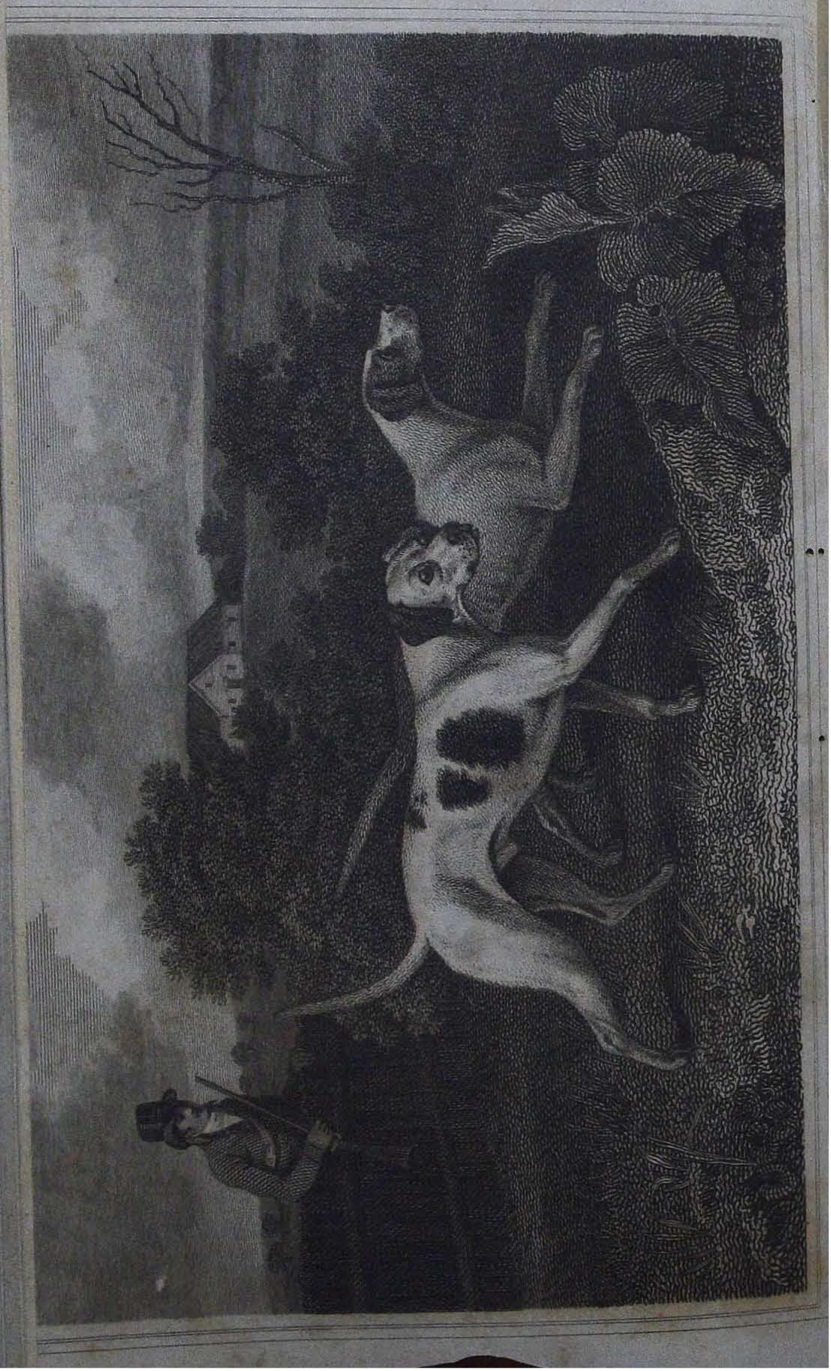
> No fierce unruly senate threatens here,
> No axe, or scaffold, to the view appear,
> No envy, disappointment, and despair.

And for the contentment which is supposed to accompany a country life, we have not only the best authority of our own time to support it, but even that of the best poets of the Augustan age. Virgil

Virgil surely felt what he wrote, when he said, "*O* "*fortunati nimium sua si bona norint, agricolæ;*" and Horace's famous ode, "*Beatus ille qui procul* "*negotiis,*" seems not less to come from the heart of a man, who is generally allowed to have had a perfect knowledge of mankind; and this, even at the time when he was the favourite of the greatest emperor, and in the midst of all the magnificence of the greatest city in the world.

The elegant Pliny also, in his epistle to Minutius Fundanus, which is admirably translated by the Earl of Orrery, whilst he arraigns the life he leads at Rome, speaks with a kind of rapture of a country life :—"Welcome," says he, "thou life "of integrity and virtue! welcome sweet and "innocent amusement! Thou that art almost pre-"ferable to business and employment of every "kind."—And it was *here*, we are told, that the great Bacon experienced his truest felicity. With regard to the *Otium cum dignitate*, so much recommended, no one, I believe, understands the true meaning of it better, or practises it more successfully than you do.

A rural life, I think, is better suited to this country than to any other; because the country in England affords pleasures and amusements unknown



known in other countries; and because its rival, our English town (or ton) life, perhaps is a less pleasant one than may be found elsewhere. If this, upon a nice investigation of the matter, should appear to be strictly true, the conclusion that would necessarily result from it might prove more than I mean it should; therefore we will drop the subject. Should you, however, differ from me in opinion of your town life, and disapprove what I have said concerning it, you may excuse me, if you please, as you would a lawyer who does the best he can for the party for whom he is retained. I think you will also excuse any expressions I may have used, which may not be current *here;* if you find, as I verily believe you may, that I have not made use of a French word, but when I could not have expressed my meaning so well by an English one. It is only an unnecessary and affected application of a foreign language, that, in my opinion, is deserving of censure.

To those who may think the danger which attends on hunting a great objection to the pursuit of it, I must beg leave to observe, that the accidents which are occasioned by it are very few. I will venture to say, that more bad accidents happen to shooters in one year, than to those who follow hounds in seven. You will remind

remind me, perhaps, of the death of T——k, and the fall of D——t;—but do accidents never happen on the road? the most famous huntsman and boldest rider of his time, after having hunted a pack of hounds for several years unhurt, lost his life at last by a fall from his horse, as he was returning home.—A surgeon of my acquaintance has assured me, that in thirty years practice, in a sporting country, he had not once an opportunity of setting a bone for a sportsman, though ten packs of hounds were kept in the neighbourhood. This gentleman, surely, must have been much out of luck, or hunting cannot be so dangerous as it is thought.—Besides they are all timid animals that we pursue, nor is there any danger in attacking them:—They are not like the furious beast of the *Gevaudun*, which, as a French author informs us, twenty thousand French Chasseurs went out in vain to kill.

If my time in writing to you, has not been so well employed as it might have been, you at least will not find that fault with it: nor shall I repent of having employed it in this manner, unless it were more certain than it is, that *I* should have employed it *better*. It is true, these letters are longer than I first intended they should be: they would have been *shorter*, could I have bestowed *more time* upon them.—Some technical words have

have crept in imperceptibly, and with them, some expressions better suited to the field, than to the closet; nor is it necessary, perhaps, that a sportsman, when he is writing to a sportsman, should make excuses for them. In some of my letters you will have found great variety of matter;—the variety of questions contained in *yours*, made it sometimes unavoidable. I know there must be some tautology; it scarcely is possible to remember all that has been said in former letters;—let that difficulty, if you please, excuse the fault. I fear there may be some contradictions for the same reason, and I doubt there should be many exceptions. I trust them all to your candour, nor can they be in better hands. I hope you will not find that I have at different times given different opinions; but should that be the case, without doubt you will follow that opinion which coincides most with your own. If on any points I have differed from great authorities, I am sorry for it: I have never hunted with those who are looked up to as the great masters of this science; and, when I differ from them, it is without design.—Other methods, without doubt, there are, to make the keeping of hounds much more expensive; which, as I do not practise myself, I shall not recommend to you;—treated after the manner here described, they will kill foxes, and shew you sport. I have answered all your ques-

tions as concisely as I have been able, and it has been my constant endeavour to say no more than I thought the subject required.—The time may come, when more experienced sportsmen, and abler pens, may do it greater justice; till then, accept the observations that I have made:—take them;—read them;—try them.—There was a time when I should readily have received the information they give, imperfect as it may be; for experience is ever a slow teacher, and I have had no other. With regard to books, Somervile is the only author whom I have found of any use on this subject; you will admire the poet, and esteem the man; yet I am not certain that you will be always satisfied with the lessons of the huntsman. Proud of the authority, I have quoted from him as often as it would suit your purpose, and for your sake have I braved the evident disadvantage that attended it. I wish this elegant poet had answered all your questions; you then would have received but one letter from me—to refer you to him. That no other writer should have followed his steps may thus, I think, be accounted for:—those gentlemen who make a profession of writing, live chiefly in town; consequently cannot be supposed to know much of hunting; and those who do know any thing of it, are either servants who cannot write, or country gentlemen who will not give themselves the trouble. However, I have met

met with some curious remarks, which I cannot help communicating to you. One author tells us, that "coursing is more agreeable than hunt-"ing, *because it is sooner over*:"——"that a "terrier *is a mungrel greyhound*:"—and "*that* "*dogs have often coughs from eating fish-*"*bones.*"—

Another, (a French author) advises us to give a horse, after hunting, "a soup made of bread "and wine, and an onion."—I fear an English groom would eat the onion and drink the wine.

The same author has also a very particular method of catching rabbits, which you will please to take in his own words, he calls it—*Chasse du lapin à l'ecrevisse.* "*Cette chasse convient* "*aux personnes qui ne veulent employer ni furets* "*ni armes à feu: on tend des poches d'une ex-*"*trêmite d'un terrier, et à l'aûtre on glisse une* "*ecrevisse; cet animal arrive peu-a-peu au fond* "*de la retraite du lapin, le pique, s'y attache* "*avec tant de force, que la quadr pede est obligé* "*de fuir, emportant avec lui son ennemi, et vient* "*se faire prendre dans le filet qu'on lui a tendu* "*à l'ouverture du terrier. Cette chasse demande* "*beaucoup de patience: les operations de l'ecre-*"*visse sont lentes, mais aussi elles sont quelque-*"*fois plus sures que celles du furet.*"

This

This gentleman's singular method of hunting rabbits *with a lobster*, reminds me a of a method harlequin has of killing hares, not less ingenious, with Spanish snuff. Brighella tells him, that the hares eat up all his master's green wheat, and that he knows not how to kill them; "nothing "more easy," replies harlequin—"I will engage "to kill them *all* with two-pennyworth of snuff. "They come in the night, you say, to feed on the "green wheat;—strew a little snuff over the field "before they come,—it will set them all a-"sneezing;—nobody will be by to say God bless "you, and of course they will all die."

I believe, during our present correspondence, that I have twice quoted the Encyclopedie with some degree of ridicule; I must, notwithstanding, beg leave to say, in justice to myself, that I have great esteem for that most valuable work.

On opening a very large book called the *Gentleman's Recreation*, I met with the following remarkable passage:—"Many have written of this "subject, as well the antients as moderns, yet "but few of our countrymen to any purpose; "and had one all the authors on this subject "(as indeed on any other) there would be more "trouble to pass by, than to retain, most books "being

"being fuller of words than matter, and of that "which is for the most part very erroneous."— All who have written on the subject of hunting seem to agree in this at least—to speak indifferently of one another.

You have observed in one of your letters, that I do not always follow my own rules; and, as a proof of it, you have remarked that many of my hounds are oddly named:——I cannot deny the charge.——I leave a great deal to my huntsman; but if you aim at perfection, leave as little as you can help to yours. It is easier, I believe, in every instance to know what is right, than it is to follow it; but, if the rules I have given are good, what does it signify to you, whether I follow them or not? A country fellow used to call every directing post he saw a *doctor*. He was asked, why he called them so? "Why, master, said he, I "never see them but they put me in mind of the "parson of our parish, who constantly points "out a road to us he does not follow himself."

If I can add to the amusement of such as follow this diversion, I shall not think that I have been ill employed; and, if the rules which are here given may any ways tend to preserve that friendly animal the hound from one unnecessary lash,

lash, I shall not think that they have been written in vain. It never was my expectation to be able to send you a complete treatise:—*Thoughts on Hunting, in a series of familiar Letters,* were all I proposed to myself the pleasure of sending to you:—the trouble I have taken in writing them, intitles me to some indulgence; nor need I, therefore, whilst I endeavour to render them of use, stand in any dread of criticism. Yet, if any man, as idle as I have already declared myself to be, should take the trouble to criticise these letters, tell him this:—An acquaintance of mine, who had bestowed much time in improving his place, whenever he heard it found fault with, "asked where the critic lived? whether he had "any place of his own? whether he had attempt- "ed any improvements? and concluded with "promising *a peep at it.*"—The gentleman here alluded to had less humility than your humble servant. Take therefore my sentiments in the following lines:

——— *Si quid novisti rectius istis,*
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.

Hor.

Farewell.

A hunting song.

The inclosed curious manuscript was called by its author a *hunting song;* it is worth your notice:——once more farwell.——

HARK! hark to the notes of the melodious French horn
How sweetly she calls you out in the morn
She tells you Jemme is mounted on Tartar his steed
And invites you all to the cover with speed
Of all pleasures or pastimes ever heard or seen
There's none in the world like to merry hunting

Hark! cover hark! the hounds are all in
The fox they have found and to his kennel they fling
He's forced now thorow the woods for to fly
Tho' nothing can save him between the earth and the sky
Of all pleasures

Hark! tally hark! out of cover they all break
And tell you the fox they ever will seek
They surely will run him until that he die
Unless some kind earth save him in his way
Of all pleasures

The fox now panting sees he must die
The hounds with their ingoys resound to the sky
There's Stately and Empress the earth scarce touch with the feet
There's Chasir and Trimmer all together as fleet
Of all pleasures

Triumph and Driver now push to head the whole pack
Whipster being stole his place for to take
I think such rascally treatment as these
Should be reproach'd by all those who seek for to please
Of all pleasures.

Bold Reynard now finding his speed will not do
Betakes to the woods the hounds may not him pursue

A hunting song.

But the hounds as at first to the cover they fly
And swear old Reynard in the field of honour shall die
Of all pleasures

There's Trimbush and Chirrup and others as good
Ralley Cleanly and Comfort drives on thorow the wood
Emperor and Conqueror will never him forsake
But drives on full speed thorow every breake
Of all pleasures

Old Reynard finding the cover can't save him
Lurkes on for the earth that us'd to preserve him
But Smiler he sees him and soon overtake
And poor Reynard his exit in the field of honour doth make
Of all pleasures

The hounds how eager to enjoy their reward
The huntsman as eager checks them with a word
He beheads old Reynard and takes off his brush
And to the hounds gives his karcass a toss
Of all pleasures

The hounds now well pleased wallow on the ground
The huntsman as well pleased to see his company around
He buckles Reynard's head to his saddle with a strap
And with his ribbon tyes the brush to his cap
Of all pleasures

Our sport being ended and our horses full jaded
We return home well pleased with our sport quite amazed
Saying was their ever such hounds as these
Or ever such hunting on — — — — weares
Of all pleasures or pastimes ever heard or seen
There's none in the world like to merry hunting

END.

JAMES CUNDEE, PRINTER, IVY-LANE,
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